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GROUP THINKING

and Conference Leadership

TECHNIQUES OF DISCUSSION

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and Conference Leadership

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GROUP THINKING

by William E. Utterback

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by Elizabeth G. Andersch
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PREFACE

This book is concerned with cooperative thinking as a democratic procedure. It is addressed to those who serve on committees, boards, and councils; to those who attend staff meetings and conferences; to those who talk over common problems in community organizations or in the church, school, or office—to all, in short, who participate in or lead informal discussion in small groups or who are preparing to do so. Its purpose is a practical one—to promote more effective group thinking.

In order to provide detailed practical advice rather than a comprehensive theoretical treatise, I have ignored such forms of discussion as the forum, the symposium, and the debate, which are adequately dealt with elsewhere, and have devoted the entire volume to a detailed consideration of one form—informal discussion in the small group. The methods recommended here have grown out of practical experience, and have been tested repeatedly in leading discussion, in conducting training institutes for discussion leaders, and in teaching courses in discussion methods.

The book is organized in three major sections. The first presents those general principles applicable to all discussion involving group thinking. The second considers some of the logical and psychological aspects of thinking, with special reference to the tasks of preparing for and participating in discussion. The third deals with the special problems encountered in several typical discussion situations. The Appendix includes material of interest primarily to the teacher: a collection of bibliographies on controversial questions, two radio panel discussions for use as illustrative material, and suggestions regarding the organization of courses in discussion.

While the short illustrative passages scattered through the body

of the text are based on actual discussions, the names and places mentioned are in every case fictitious. The two radio panel discussions included in the Appendix, however, were presented at the time and place and by the persons mentioned in the introductory paragraphs.

It is impossible to acknowledge adequately my debt to previous writers on group discussion. Those I have found especially helpful are mentioned frequently in the short bibliographies appended to the chapters. Nor can I estimate the even greater debt I owe to the groups I have led in discussion, the discussion leaders with whom I have conferred, and the students with whom I have worked in the classroom. All have contributed much to the following pages.

More specific acknowledgment of assistance is due those associated with me in the teaching of discussion courses at The Ohio State University: Mortimer L. Feigenbaum, Wallace C. Fotheringham, Mary W. Graham, James A. Grissinger, and Mary E. Ludlum. Finally, for editorial assistance in preparing the manuscript I am heavily indebted to my wife, Helen Tappan Utterback.

WILLIAM E. UTTERBACK

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Group Thinking

and Conference Leadership

TECHNIQUES OF DISCUSSION

CHAPTER ONE

DECISION THROUGH DISCUSSION

The conference table is rapidly becoming an indispensable tool of modern civilization. Conference is democracy at work, and the problems which chiefly threaten our society admit of no solution except through the democratic process. Essentially our problems are these: How can large numbers of people cooperate without surrendering their freedom to a dictator? and How can they settle their conflicts without resorting to violence? Neither problem is soluble except at the conference table. Consequently we see each year more of the world's business conducted by small groups seated around tables attempting to reach collective decisions through cooperative discussion.

WHAT IS GROUP DISCUSSION?

We may observe the use of informal discussion as a social tool in almost any area of social life and at any level of cooperative action from the simplest committee meeting to a conference of foreign ministers. Let us look in on the world at work.

In a typical American town the program committee of a businessmen's luncheon club is in session:

MR. BROWN: I think we've overdone entertainment. Our members have had enough of parlor magic and funny stories.

CHAIRMAN: You want speeches on political topics?

MR. BROWN: Why not?

MR. CALDWELL: We had something of the sort last fall. The talks were pretty dull.

MR. CLAYMAN: The problem is to find really good speakers on live topics. It's hard to do in a town of this size. But there are several possibilities. . . .

Meanwhile down the street in the office of a business firm the department heads are seated around a table:

SALES MANAGER: I tell you the day of coal as a household fuel is on the way out, at least in this area. Gas is cleaner, and the idea is catching on. We have inquiries every day about converting to gas.

PRODUCTION MANAGER: But the supply of gas is too uncertain in Ohio. Remember the trouble gas users had last winter!

TREASURER: It seems to me the problem is whether we should take a long- or short-range view. If we start installing gas furnaces now, we won't pick up much business in that line for a few years. But the present gas shortage is only a transportation problem. It won't last.

PRESIDENT: Right! But apart from the temporary gas shortage, is the trend really toward the use of gas? Have you any figures on that, Keegan? . . .

In another office of the same firm a committee tackles a shop problem:

MR. SORENSEN: The problem, as I see it, is this: On the third floor every machine operator loses time waiting for a dolly to bring material to the machine.

FOREMAN CUMMINGS: There are ten dollies on the floor. What more do you want?

MR. TALLADAY: The trouble is that when material is brought to a machine, it isn't unloaded. The operator unloads it as he uses the material.

MR. CARLSON: And that makes a good deal of sense. To unload the material and then pick it up from the floor is a waste of time.

MR. SORENSEN: Just the same, half the dollies are tied up most of the time.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know, Cummings, whether all of the dollies on the other floors are in use? . . .

Not many blocks away a council made up of ten representative citizens is considering a community problem:

MR. HOLMES: It's the teen-age children that are the heart of the problem. That certainly has been my observation, and the report from the police department bears it out.

CHAIRMAN: Our playground facilities are fairly adequate now, aren't they?

FATHER KELLEY: I would say yes. The situation there has been improved a good deal.

MR. CANE: But this isn't a playground problem. The trouble occurs in the evening. The youngsters have nothing to do but roam the streets. We are doing what we can for the boys in the YM and through the Scout Council, but it isn't enough.

MRS. COHEN: It seems to me what we need is some kind of social center that can be kept open under proper supervision from 7 to 10 in the evening. . . .

While the community council explores the problem of a social center, classes are in session at the high school. The class in Social Studies has just viewed a short film entitled "Democracy":

TEACHER: According to the film, we don't really have democracy if power is concentrated in a few hands while the majority of people have nothing to say about how the government is run. Using this definition as a yardstick, would you say that student activities here are run democratically?

JOHN: Not by a long shot! There are five on the student council, and they run the whole show.

HELEN: Not entirely. Sometimes they put things up to a vote during an assembly period.

EDWARD: But not very often. Most of the time they settle it.

CAROL: Suppose they do. How else can you get anything done? Besides, everybody gets to vote when the council is elected.

EDWARD: But how many do vote? Very few.

HELEN: Whose fault is that? Everybody can vote if he likes. What more can you ask?

EDWARD: Well, it's the fault of the students, then, not the fault of the system. Just the same, democracy isn't working right if only a few vote. . . .

And that evening at the home of Mr. Hanson fifteen friends and neighbors are seated in a circle in the living room:

MODERATOR: We come now to the question whether the Marshall Plan is likely to have an inflationary effect in this country.

MRS. TYLER: How can it help it? The way I look at it is this: We are sending Europe certain things they especially need over there—things like coal and steel and machinery. Those are the very things we are short of.

MR. FAUCET: On those commodities prices are already up and going higher. If the government goes into the market and buys large amounts of those items, the price is bound to go up.

DR. CATLAN: That sounds reasonable. But higher prices on a few commodities hardly add up to inflation.

MRS. TYLER: Isn't the question really whether a rise in the price of a few commodities will take all prices up with it? . . .

Various as are the subjects and situations, these samples of discussion have much in common. In each the group is small, usually between five and twenty. No speeches are being delivered; discussion is taking the form rather of informal conversation in which all participate freely and equally. And in each group a leader is directing the conversation to a specific problem or topic.

This is group discussion as we shall understand it in the pages to follow. We may distinguish it on the one hand from casual social conversation, which is undirected and seldom sticks long to one topic. And we may distinguish it from various forms of public discussion: from public address, in which a few speak while an audience listens; from a forum, in which many may speak from the floor but in which discussion takes the form of short talks rather than of informal conversation; and from the question period following a public address, in which members of the audience address questions to the speaker. These forms of discussion are all useful in their time and place, but our concern will be with informal discussion in the small group.

WHY DISCUSSION?

The values of such discussion are partly practical, partly educational.

In the committee, the staff meeting, the labor-management conference, or the community council the practical advantages of decision by cooperative discussion arise from the nature of the administrative process. To be successful a policy must be soundly conceived and must receive the wholehearted support of those who are to execute it. In formulating the policy the more wealth of information, suggestion, and viewpoint that can be brought to bear, the better. It is seldom that one person, however well informed, can match the resources of a group whose members bring a varied background to discussion of a problem. In planning a community recreational program, for example, the scout master, the YMCA director, the heads of social agencies, the business and religious leaders, the teacher, the parent—all have something to contribute. A new policy hammered out in discussion by all of those who have something to contribute is likely to be sounder than a policy formulated by any one person alone.

And when those who are to execute the policy have had a hand in its making, they put more intelligence and energy into its execution. If discussion is continued until substantial agreement

is reached, the thinking of each member is represented in the conclusion. Each feels that the decision is in part his own, and execution of the policy is not embarassed by the apathy or hostility of a disgruntled minority.

These practical advantages of group thinking are compelling reasons for making cooperative discussion a part of the administrative process. But discussion has educational values as well. They are perhaps best illustrated by the community round table devoted to consideration of a political or economic problem on which the group will not take collective action. Here the object is to help each member make up his own mind on the question, and it matters little whether agreement is reached. The individual participant benefits in several ways.

In the first place, few experiences so effectively develop a lively and continuing interest in a public problem as does earnest, thoughtful discussion in a small group. What we do something about becomes interesting and important to us. And to discuss, say, the German question earnestly is to do at least something about it. The member of a round table is not a passive spectator. He states his own view, hears it criticized, returns to its defense, perhaps modifying it as he does so. The more he handles the problem in discussion, the more real it becomes to him. It is a common observation that at the close of discussion members seldom leave the room immediately. They stand around in knots of two or three still discussing the problem, and usually they may still be heard in earnest conversation as they go up the street. They have developed an interest in the question that will prompt them to read further on it, to listen to speeches or radio programs dealing with it, and to discuss it with their friends. It is difficult to overestimate the quickening of interest in public affairs that results from regular participation in discussion of this kind.

The member of a round table will also find himself progressively better informed on public questions. Discussion whets his appetite for more serious and purposeful reading than he would

be likely to do otherwise. And the information brought out in the course of discussion adds to his knowledge. The question here is not by what method most information can be laid before a group, but rather by what method a group can be brought to assimilate and make practical use of most information. Reading a book or listening to a speech is usually a passive process, and most of what goes in one ear, or eye, soon goes out the other. But when we put information to practical use in discussion, we do not soon forget it.

And discussion clarifies, as well as enriches, the participant's thinking. The confusion or error in one's thinking about a public question is peculiar to himself. It can seldom be removed by a public speaker, who cannot address himself to the individual but must deliver a broadside of information and argument at the audience as a whole. In discussion one must state and defend his views. If he is in error, the group will set him right. If he is confused, the necessity he is under of stating his views will force him to think more clearly.

In addition to quickening one's interest in public affairs and enriching and clarifying one's thinking about them, discussion develops two attitudes highly desirable in themselves. One is the attitude of objectivity toward ideas and arguments, a virtue as rare as it is basic to straight thinking. When Smith and Brown disagree, Smith is likely to think of Brown's argument as a weapon with which Brown is trying to strike him. He is likely also to think of his own argument as a weapon to use against Brown. Only with difficulty do we bring ourselves to dissociate an idea or argument from personalities and to regard it as an object of interest in its own right which we can handle and examine disinterestedly as we might examine a physical object. There is no better place to learn this difficult lesson than in the discussion group, where the consequences of emotional and wishful thinking are so immediately obvious.

Finally, the discipline of thinking together does much to develop a sympathetic attitude toward those who disagree with

us. In discussion we cannot simply shout the other fellow down; if we are to reach agreement, we must listen to what he is saying and make the effort necessary to understand him. It usually turns out that there is at least something in what he is saying. And when he realizes that we understand his point and appreciate its value, that we are trying to incorporate it into the larger pattern of growing truth which the group is working out together, he becomes more willing to examine our own argument sympathetically. With experience in discussion one comes to feel that almost anything another person believes earnestly probably has at least a grain of truth in it, however deeply buried in error or confusion it may be. To act on this assumption habitually is to be truly liberal.

DISCUSSION AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The practical and educational values of group discussion are of concern to the groups and individuals immediately involved. Looking at the matter more broadly, we may observe also that discussion is an essential part of the democratic process.

Democracy has been defined as government by talk. Though a partial definition, the statement comes near the truth. In any organized society people must work together—voluntarily, as in a democracy, or under coercion, as in an autocracy. People will seldom cooperate voluntarily in either a committee or a nation except as action is based on collective decision reached through cooperative thinking. And to think together we must talk together. From the simplest neighborhood organization to the United Nations, therefore, government is conducted in large part by conference.

We take it for granted that conference will be the order of the day in government at the higher levels—in the executive offices and in the legislative committee room. We do not always appreciate its necessity at the grass-roots level. But here also, and here especially, democracy flourishes or withers according as there is much or little of public interest finding expression in earnest,

thoughtful, and informed discussion. The more of such discussion we have, the better—discussion in the church, in the school, in the labor union and the managerial office, in community organizations and in the neighborhood round table.

But we must be concerned with the quality as well as with the quantity of discussion. As any member of committees or round tables can testify, much group discussion is too ill-informed and poorly conducted to serve any purpose. The quality of democracy at all levels needs to be improved by more discussion, and by better discussion. We must disabuse ourselves of the comfortable illusion that discussion, like breathing or walking, is something that anyone can do well without thought, effort, or knowledge of method. In the following pages our concern will be with how to make group thinking more profitable, whether it is addressed to the cooperative solution of practical problems, as in a committee or staff meeting, or to the enrichment and clarification of individual thinking, as in the schoolroom or the community round table.

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PART 1

PRINCIPLES OF GROUP THINKING

CHAPTER TWO

WHEN IS DISCUSSION PROFITABLE?

It must not be supposed that the conference table possesses the magic property of generating wisdom when rubbed simultaneously by a dozen pairs of elbows. As we shall observe in future chapters, success depends very much on the skill brought to the table by moderator and participants. It depends also on the physical arrangements that have been made in advance of the meeting, on the make-up and attitude of the group itself, on the question selected for discussion, and on the leader's provision for making information available to the group. Without the conditions necessary for effective group thinking, the moderator can do little to make discussion profitable.

SETTING THE STAGE

Satisfactory physical arrangements are more important than might be supposed. This is true especially of the seating arrangement. The members of the group should be seated close together; they have more feeling of belonging to the group when they touch elbows. And they should be able to see each other and the moderator without turning around. Good discussion is almost impossible when the group is seated primly in rows, as in an auditorium, or when it is scattered about in a large room.

Probably the best arrangement is to seat the members around a large table. If a number of small tables are available, they may be arranged in a hollow square with the members seated around the outside facing each other. They should not be set end to end, making one long narrow table, as is often done in hotel conference rooms; the members seated on the same side of the table cannot see each other.

Frequently no table of any kind is available, as when the group meets in the living room of a private home. In this case the mem-

bers should sit in a semicircle facing the leader. For a larger group the chairs are arranged in a double semicircle.

A portable blackboard placed where all can see it and where the leader can turn to it conveniently will be found useful. And wall space for the display of diagrams, charts, and maps is desirable.

Discussion is necessarily a leisurely process, and adequate time for it must be available. It is a mistake to schedule a conference at an hour when discussion must be hurried or many of the members must leave early. And it is unwise to protract discussion to the point of fatigue. A single session should seldom last longer than 2 hours, and for many groups 1½ hours is better. If a conference is to remain in session throughout the day, a brief recess every 1½ hours will improve the quality of discussion.

THE GROUP

In organizing a committee, conference, or discussion group one must recognize that success depends a good deal on the constitution of the group itself and on the conception of discussion its members bring to the meeting.

Fruitful discussion is impossible in a group too large for informal conversation. Most experienced discussion leaders agree that twenty are about as many as can participate profitably. A larger group soon divides into the few who talk and the many who listen. If discussion is to be attempted with a larger group, certain adaptations of the method (to be discussed in Chapter 10) may be employed. On the other hand, as few as three or four may discuss a problem profitably if the members represent a sufficient diversity of background and viewpoint.

The group should be composed of persons genuinely interested in the problem to be discussed. Very few can enjoy or contribute much to the discussion of what they consider an academic topic. When membership of the group is fixed, as in clubs or neighborhood round tables that meet regularly, the problem is one of selecting topics to fit the interests of the group. We shall say more

of this presently. But when a committee is being appointed or a conference is being organized to consider a given problem, care should be taken to include on the committee or to invite to the conference those who are vitally concerned with the problem—those whose personal or community interests are involved, those who will be expected to cooperate in carrying out any policy adopted.

Given a community of interest in the problem to be discussed, the more diversity of background and viewpoint represented in the group, the better. If a group of neighbors is to discuss a national or international question, the more nearly it represents a cross section of the political views of the community, the more lively and fruitful discussion will be. The tendency of birds of a feather to flock together promotes congeniality, but it does not make for good discussion. The same principle holds for a committee or community council concerned with the solution of a practical problem. Persons of contrasting views and backgrounds bring to the conference table the richness of information and suggestion essential to good discussion.

A group of the right size, inspired by a common interest in the question, and bringing to the meeting a rich variety of experience, should be capable of profitable discussion.

How fruitful its discussion will be, however, will depend somewhat on its conception of the nature and purpose of discussion. When a group unused to the method is meeting for the first time, it may be worth while to suggest to the members that informal discussion is best thought of as a cooperative problem-solving activity aiming at consensus rather than at decision by a majority vote.

The conception of discussion as a cooperative enterprise implies that all members participate freely and on a basis of equality, no one expecting to be told what to think or to tell others what to think. It implies also that so far as is humanly possible each member holds his opinion tentatively and subject to revision. In discussion we are inquirers, not advocates, and

those who are certain they already know all the answers can contribute little.

It is useful, too, to remember that the group is meeting not to talk about a topic, but to attempt the solution of a problem. The problem-solving nature of the business under consideration in a committee or staff meeting is usually too obvious to be missed. But many groups are content to discuss somewhat vaguely such topics as atomic energy, the status of the Negro in American life, or the role of good will in industrial relations. Better discussion will usually result if a specific problem is proposed for discussion and worded interrogatively as a question to which the group will seek an answer: Should atomic energy be placed under international control? Would a federal antipoll-tax law improve the Negro's status in the South? How can good will best be developed in labor-management relations? The problem-solving attitude gives purpose and direction to the thinking of the group.

And the group should try to reach a consensus on the question discussed rather than settle its differences by voting. When successful discussion has run its full course, differences of opinion are resolved to the satisfaction of all. At the end of the session no one feels that the truth as he now sees it has been compromised or that he has been overpowered by the weight of numbers. In practice this ideal is not always attainable, but to resort too quickly to a vote as a method of settling the many differences of opinion that arise is to miss the spirit and purpose of group discussion.

THE PROBLEM

Problems suitable for group discussion are of many kinds, but perhaps most of them could be grouped under three heads: problems of group action, problems of public policy, and problems of personal conduct.

By problems of group action we mean those in which the object is to formulate a policy which the group itself, acting collec-

tively, will put into operation or will recommend for action. The community council, the policy-forming committee, the staff, the grievance committee, and local organizations of all kinds engaged in the management of their own affairs deal primarily with problems of this type. The problem to be discussed is of immediate and local concern; the end in view is action by the group; and substantial agreement must be reached before the discussion can be considered successful. In situations of this kind there is little opportunity to select the problem with a view to its suitability for discussion. The problem is already at hand, and the group must find a solution if it can.

Problems of public policy are those dealing with state, national, or international questions on which the average citizen must make up his mind to vote intelligently. It matters little whether a community round table discussing such a problem reaches agreement or not. Discussion is successful if it has helped the individual member to understand the problem, to clarify his thinking on it, and to reach a settled opinion with which he is personally satisfied. The public policy which the citizen is invited to approve or disapprove or the policies among which he is invited to choose have already been formulated, usually by a legislative committee. The object of discussion is individual decision on policy rather than group formulation of policy.

By a problem of personal conduct is not meant a particular problem encountered by a single individual, but one which nearly every individual encounters in his daily life as businessman, parent, or citizen. A few examples will illustrate the type: What should be my attitude at Conway High School toward Negroes in my classes? As a mother how should I deal with the untruthful child? As a businessman what should be my attitude toward the outside union organizer? As a high-school teacher how should I deal with the discipline problem in my classroom? How late should teen-age children stay out on school nights? What arrangement should a family make for an elderly relative who has no means of support?

Life is a succession of personal and family problems of this sort. With due allowance for variation in circumstances, the problems are much the same for all individuals. And people of all sorts find it profitable to explore them at the conference table. The object of discussion is not to formulate policy on which the group will act collectively or to help the individual make up his mind on public policy formulated in Washington. It is to help the individual understand better a problem he must often encounter and to arrive at general principles by which to guide his own conduct.

Problems of the last type are more provocative of discussion when stated concretely. Often the discussion leader, drawing on his own experience, observation, or imagination, can construct a typical case which presents the problem in dramatic form. In opening a discussion by a parent-teacher association of the parent's responsibility in connection with truancy, he might present in story form a truancy case bristling with challenging questions and then invite discussion of the question, What would you have done if you had been this child's mother? Most people react more vigorously to a concrete situation presenting a problem than to an abstract statement of a topic. The situation presented must of course be close to the experience of the group, so that each recognizes in it a problem similar to those he encounters in his own life.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In one respect the following passage is typical of all discussion:

LEADER: Apparently you all agree that the United Nations does not go far enough and that we need a true world government. But you also agree that Russia probably would not go along on such a proposal. How, then, are you to get world government?

MRS. DORNE: One possibility is to scrap the UN and set up a world government without Russia.

MR. CARTWRIGHT: But it's always bad to scrap a going concern. In the end you may get nothing in its place. Wouldn't it make more sense to strengthen the UN in the direction of world government?

MR. SWIFT: On general principles I would agree. But you could convert the UN into a world government only by elaborately amending the Charter. Can that be done if Russia opposes it?

LEADER: That is a question of fact. Let's examine Article 109, which lays down the procedure for amending the Charter.

MR. CARTWRIGHT: Here it is. Article 109 reads as follows: . . .

This exchange is typical of all discussion in that questions of two sorts arise. One is a question of principle, or value: Is it wise to scrap an existing institution? The second is a question of fact: Can the Charter be amended if Russia opposes amendment? All differences of opinion arise over questions either of principle or of fact, and most of the contributions made in discussion are statements of principle or of fact. A disputed question of principle may be settled by the analysis, criticism, and eventual modification of the opposing views. But difference over a question of fact cannot be resolved without the fact. The discussion quoted above would soon have reached a dead end if the necessary fact had not been available.

It is an essential condition of profitable discussion that information be available. Without it the group will either waste its time in idle speculation or will be obliged to shelve one disputed question of fact after another with the result that no conclusion can be reached.

In discussing problems of personal conduct much of the necessary information is common knowledge. A group of mothers, for example, might profitably discuss a problem in the handling of children on the basis of their own experience and observation—though information from the child psychologist would undoubtedly improve the discussion. But in considering most problems the group will need more information than it already possesses

if discussion is to be worth while, and provision must be made in advance for making the information available. This may be done in any one of four ways.

The Rosedale Women's Club is composed for the most part of women with the time and inclination to do serious reading in preparation for their discussion of universal military training. Two weeks in advance of the meeting each member receives a brief bibliography of books and articles on the subject available in the local library. Members appear at the meeting reasonably well informed and in many cases armed with printed material to which they can refer in the course of discussion.

But the Rosedale Women's Club is a serious study group. The chairman of the Businessmen's Club has found that few members of the club have time to prepare thoroughly for discussion. If the group is to consider military training, it will be well to ask several of the members who have time for it either to present brief factual reports on the problem before discussion is attempted, or to have information at hand on particular points likely to come up in the discussion. Such reports are more likely to be useful if the member is given a list of available sources of information to consult and if it is suggested that what is wanted from him primarily is an impartial statement of fact rather than an expression of opinion.

In some cases one or more persons qualified to speak as experts on the subject can be invited to attend the meeting. A community council considering a recreational program for the community, for example, might arrange to have the heads of social agencies in the town participate in the discussion or attend as expert witnesses to supply information. It should always be made clear to such resource persons what will be expected of them. Otherwise they may monopolize the conversation and so overawe the laymen in the group that no real discussion is possible.

Frequently the discussion leader himself must be the chief source of information for the group. While he will seldom be an expert on the subject, and it is not necessary that he should be,

the better informed he is, the more useful he will be. He should be prepared to open the discussion with a 10- or 15-minute factual statement, laying a foundation on which discussion can proceed; and so far as possible he should be ready to supply additional items of information as needed during discussion.

All members of the group, then, may study the problem in advance, several of them may prepare reports for the information of the group, experts may be called in to testify, or the leader himself may undertake to supply information. But in one way or another the information necessary for intelligent consideration of the problem must be made available if discussion is to serve its purpose.

To summarize the suggestions of this chapter, discussion is unlikely to be profitable unless care has been taken in advance to ensure conditions favorable to group thinking. Suitable physical arrangements and provision for adequate time must be made; the group must be of the right size and properly constituted, and it must approach its work with a sound conception of what group thinking is; the problem must be suitable for discussion by the particular group; and there must be provision for making the necessary information available. Given these conditions, the stage is set for a profitable session; without them the most skillful leadership will be of little avail.

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CHAPTER THREE

PREPARING FOR DISCUSSION

Pooling ignorance does not produce wisdom. As we observed in the preceding chapter, one condition of profitable discussion is adequate information on the question discussed. On some of the practical problems considered by committees and administrative boards and on some of those discussed by community organizations the necessary information is already common knowledge; on others it can be obtained only by calling in experts. But on most state, national, and international questions information must be sought in the library. Those preparing for discussion of such topics, whether as participants or moderators, should be willing to do serious reading.

GENERAL INFORMATION

To participate in discussion effectively one needs a general knowledge of current events as well as information on the specific topic to be discussed. This background cannot be acquired hastily; it is the cumulative product of regular and thoughtful newspaper reading. Even the regular reading of a good Sunday edition soon gives one the feeling that he knows at least in a general way who is who and what is what in the world of public affairs. Especially useful is Section 4 of the Sunday *New York Times,* devoted to a review of the news of the week. Incidentally, a file of this section of the *Times* is extremely useful when one wishes to "get up" on a particular topic. By glancing through the file for the last month or two he can piece together a dependable account of what has been happening in connection with almost any topic of public interest.

Without a general background of information the participant in discussion is betrayed constantly into minor inaccuracies in statement of fact that make him sound ill-informed even when

he has spent considerable time in study of the topic. Those wishing to discuss public questions should make thoughtful newspaper reading a habit.

READING ON THE PROBLEM

Usually one must also inform himself on the topic to be discussed. Of the many available sources of information one of the most useful is the university or public library. If the topic has long been under discussion, books on it may be available. The reader should consult the card-index catalogue of books in the library, and should not hesitate to ask the librarian for help. An acquaintance with the controversial literature on both sides of the question will be helpful, but what one needs especially is factual information; so the more impartial sources should primarily be consulted.

On many topics of current interest newspapers and magazines will be the chief source of information. Libraries subscribe to the more important magazines, and most of them take several daily newspapers. The *New York Times,* the standard newspaper for reference work in this country, will be found in nearly all libraries. To find what is available in the magazines, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* may be consulted. This index lists magazine articles alphabetically by subject, author, and title. The *New York Times Index* provides a comparable guide to news articles, editorials, and special articles appearing in that newspaper.

Much informational material is distributed free, or at a nominal cost, by governmental and private agencies. The Program Information Exchange, 41 Maiden Lane, New York 7, N.Y., supplies at a nominal cost information regarding sources of material on many domestic and international problems. The Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 22 East Thirty-Eighth Street, New York 16, N.Y., publishes a series of *Public Affairs Pamphlets.* The "Headline Series" of pamphlets and the "Foreign Policy Reports" are issued by the Foreign Policy Association, also at

22 East Thirty-Eighth Street, New York 16, N.Y. The League of Women Voters of the United States, 726 Jackson Place, Washington 6, D.C., publishes pamphlet material on many public questions. The American Association for the United Nations and the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, both with headquarters at 45 East Sixty-Fifth Street, New York 21, N.Y., publish material on international relations and the work of the United Nations, as does the International Document Service, Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N.Y.

The American Association for the United Nations, referred to above, publishes also a monthly news magazine, *Changing World,* covering the activities of the United Nations. A similar monthly, *United Nations News,* is published by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, 45 East Sixty-Fifth Street, New York 21, N.Y. Perhaps the best single source of current information on the activities of the United Nations is the *United Nations Bulletin,* published twice a month by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations, Lake Success, New York.

Several discussion guides are available. *Changing World,* referred to above, contains a department entitled "The People's Section," addressed to the discussion leader. In each issue this department proposes for discussion a controversial question related to the United Nations, presents an excellent statement of facts on the question, and suggests an agenda for use in discussion. *Let's Discuss It* is published monthly and distributed free by The Ohio State University Discussion Service, 205 Derby Hall, Ohio State University, Columbus 10, Ohio. Each number proposes three questions for discussion and lists for each an agenda and a brief bibliography of reading material. It contains also a department entitled "Discussion Clinic," in which the problems of the discussion leader are considered.

In addition to the discussion guides two monthly publications presenting arguments pro and con on public questions will often prove useful. One is *Platform,* published by Newsweek, 152 West

Forty-Second Street, New York 18, N.Y. *The Congressional Digest,* published at 1631 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C., contains information and comment on questions pending in Congress.

THE DISCUSSION OUTLINE

As one studies a problem, he accumulates a store of information and argument likely to be useful in discussion. Much of it he will promptly forget unless he takes notes. Obviously a notebook filled with unorganized jottings will be of little use at the conference table. Notes taken on 3-by-5 index cards can be arranged under a set of headings and are more convenient to use.

Perhaps still more convenient is a discussion outline in which one has organized for ready reference the information and evidence accumulated during his study of the problem. Such an outline cannot of course be followed in discussion as a speaker might follow an outline in delivering a public address; it is to be thought of rather as a storehouse of information and argument which the participant may wish to consult from time to time during discussion as need for particular items of information arises.

A convenient form for the outline is illustrated below. The introduction contains in outline form a statement of the question, definitions, expository material, and the agenda which the participant believes should be followed in discussion. At the beginning of its deliberation the group may of course agree upon a different statement of the question, and following the procedure suggested in Chapter 4, may arrive at a somewhat different agenda.

The issues listed in the agenda provide section headings for the argumentative material in the body of the outline. This material also is in outline rather than paragraph form and is arranged in two columns, that in the first column supporting an affirmative answer to the issue, that in the second column, a negative answer. In the complete outline, argument would be similarly arranged under the other two issues.

The third division of the outline lists the student's principal sources of information.

INTRODUCTION

I. Question: Should federal lobbies be further regulated?
II. Definitions:
  A. A "lobby" is a paid staff maintained in Washington by any group for the purpose of influencing legislation in the interest of the group.
  B. By "regulation" is meant regulation by federal law.
III. Exposition:
  A. At present lobbies are regulated only by the Legislative Reorganization Act.
  B. This act provides that
    1. The lobbyist must register with the clerk of the House and the secretary of the Senate;
    2. He must state who employs him;
    3. He must reveal the amount of his salary and living allowance.
IV. Agenda:
  A. Does the lobby affect American political life favorably?
  B. Does the Legislative Reorganization Act sufficiently guard against the harmful effects of lobbying?
  C. What further regulatory legislation would be desirable?

BODY

I. Does the lobby affect American political life favorably?

A. The lobbyist assists Congress in drafting legislation, for
  1. He can inform Congress on the subjects covered by legislation, for
    a. He is an expert on

A. Congress needs no assistance from the lobbyist in drafting legislation, for
  1. Legislative committees can summon experts to testify before them, and
  2. Most congressmen have

the subject of his interest, and

b. He can employ a research staff to assist him, and

c. He is kept informed by his interest group regarding its needs.

2. He can often give Congress expert advice on the technical details of drafting legislation, for

a. He often has legal training, and

b. He knows in detail how legislation will affect his interest group.

had legal training.

B. Lobbying often results in legislation contrary to the public interest, for

1. The interest of the lobbyist's employing group is often contrary to the public interest, and

2. The lobbyist can win legislative support for the measure he advocates, for

a. He has personal access to members of Congress, while

b. The public has no comparable means of making its influence felt.

C. The methods of the lobbyist are sometimes objectionable, for

1. He may use large sums of money for lavish entertainment, and

2. He can finance an avalanche of telegrams and letters to congressmen purporting to come from the public.

II. Does the Legislative Reorganization Act sufficiently guard against the harmful effects of lobbying? etc.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MAPPING THE PROBLEM

When conducted under favorable conditions discussion is usually lively and interesting. In some situations nothing more is desired. But most groups have a definite purpose. The committee, the staff meeting, or the community council has a problem to solve; so does the neighborhood round table, though it may make little difference whether it reaches agreement or a solution. Not content with intellectual amusement, such groups have a destination in view and wish to arrive there as surely and expeditiously as possible.

A group setting out on the troubled and sometimes treacherous sea of discussion without a map to guide it is unlikely to reach any destination, however interesting the expedition may prove. It will drift haphazardly from one aspect of the problem to another, wasting much time in repetitious and irrelevant remarks and failing in the end to consider some phase of the problem essential to a sound solution. Much committee discussion is of this kind. It affords a lively exchange of views but produces no such change of views as would make agreement possible, and often it reveals little awareness of what those crucial points are upon which decision logically should turn.

What the group needs is a map of the territory to be covered, indicating the boundaries within which discussion is to be confined and subdividing the area to be explored. Such a map we shall refer to as the agenda. Typically it consists of a series of questions to be taken up in turn and to which the group will seek answers as it searches for a solution of the problem. In some cases the questions composing the agenda can themselves be broken down into subordinate questions.

Will one set of questions serve the purpose of an agenda about as well as another? Clearly not; the questions cannot be picked

out of the air at random. Consider an actual situation. The community chest board of a small village has met to consider whether $350 of unallocated funds should be used to finance a scouting program for boys:

PRESIDENT: Before we get into the discussion, let's consider how we should tackle the problem.

JONES: It seems to me the logical place to begin would be with the history of the scouting movement in America—what the program is and how successful it has been.

MRS. SMITH: We should consider, too, what purposes lie back of the program, that is, what the objectives of scouting are.

SHUMAKER: Some of you may remember that we used to have two scout troops here. I guess it didn't work out very well, but shouldn't we try to find out why?

PRESIDENT: What do you say, then, to our taking up in order the three following questions?

1. What are the objectives of scouting?
2. What has been the history of scouting in America?
3. What has been our own experience with scouting?

This group is not off to a very good start. The agenda adopted would certainly be better than none. Information assembled on the three questions would provide a useful background for discussion. But the questions do not indicate the considerations on which decision must be based; and when they have been answered, the group may still be far from a decision.

Would not the following start promise more?

PRESIDENT: How do you think we should tackle the problem, Jones?

JONES: Well, why not apply to this proposal the two principles we always use in deciding whether to admit a new organization or activity to the community chest: How many members

of the community would benefit? And how much would those persons benefit?

SHUMAKER: Yes, that gives us a yardstick for measuring the proposal. On the first question we could get the facts on the number of boys in town of scouting age, and we could form some estimate of the number who could be drawn into the program.

MRS. SMITH: Then we could consider how much those boys would benefit. And to decide that we would see just what facilities and activities could be provided for $350 and then consider how much good that sort of program would accomplish.

PRESIDENT: Suppose, then, we take this as our agenda:

1. How many boys could be drawn into a scouting program?
2. How much would these boys benefit?
   a) What facilities and activities could be provided for $350?
   b) How much would such a program accomplish for the boys who took part in it?

This agenda is more useful than the first because it is based on an analysis of the problem. If the group can agree on the answers to the questions proposed, it will have reached a decision on the problem before it.

Usually the first task of a discussion group is to analyze its problem and work out an agenda. And the task is too important to be hurried. If four or five sessions are to be devoted to the problem, all of the first may be needed for this spadework. While the process of analysis cannot be reduced to a rule of thumb, it may be useful to note the steps a group usually takes in its search for a satisfactory agenda. Typically it raises four questions: (1) What is the problem? (2) Out of what facts does the problem arise? (3) By what criteria are solutions of the problem to be evaluated? (4) What possible solutions of the problem should be examined? As these questions are answered to the satisfaction

of all members, or as difference of opinion is revealed in the attempt to answer them, the agenda emerges.

At this point it may occur to the reader that these four steps themselves, with perhaps the addition of a fifth, afford an outline, or agenda, that might be followed in discussing any problem. It is true that consideration of a problem usually involves the following steps:

1. Statement and definition of the problem,
2. Examination of the facts out of which the problem arises,
3. Consideration of the criteria to be used in evaluating solutions,
4. Examination and appraisal of solutions,
5. Consideration of the steps to be taken in carrying out the solution adopted.

As a matter of fact, a group sometimes does follow these five steps as a guide to the study and discussion of a problem. Experience suggests, however, that the group usually saves time if, after taking the first three steps, it lists the solutions to be examined and then works out an agenda indicating in question form the points on which its study up to that point has revealed a difference of opinion within the group. This crystallization of the issues requiring detailed discussion clears the air by separating the controversial from the noncontroversial aspects of the problem. After threshing out the issues listed in its agenda and agreeing upon a solution, the group proceeds to the last step indicated above—consideration of the steps to be taken in carrying out the solution adopted.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

What is the problem?—When a group is sufficiently interested in a problem to discuss it, it may seem superfluous to inquire what that problem is. But often the group is conscious only of a vaguely felt difficulty. A community council meeting to consider the relation between the Negro minority and the rest of the community may be at a loss to say precisely what the prob-

lem is. No policy of segregation is imposed on the minority group; all enjoy the same economic and educational opportunities; there have been no unpleasant incidents or other obvious indications of friction between the races. Yet all feel that the situation is not entirely wholesome. While there is no apparent ill will between the groups, there is also very little cooperation between them. Neither group feels that the Negroes are really a part of the community. After considerable discussion the council may decide that the problem might be stated in these terms: How can the colored group be integrated more completely into the life of the community? The vaguely felt difficulty has now been crystallized as a problem which can be examined intelligently.

Or the need to locate the problem and formulate it precisely may arise from vagueness or confusion regarding the meaning of terms. A round table proposing to discuss socialized medicine must decide in advance what it means by "socialized medicine." Does the term include voluntary health-insurance plans or only those administered by the government? And would administration be by the state governments or by the federal government? Are various forms of public medicine to be examined, or will discussion be restricted to some one proposal, perhaps that embodied in the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill? What is needed is such an agreement in advance on the meaning of terms as will define clearly the area within which discussion is to be confined.

When the problem has been located and defined, it should be stated interrogatively as a question to which the group will seek an answer rather than simply as a topic to be talked about. Interrogative statement helps to sharpen the problem-solving attitude in discussion.

At this point it may be useful to observe that the question to be discussed may finally be stated in terms of the problem itself, in terms of the specific objective to be achieved by any solution adopted, or in terms of some one solution. In preparing to dis-

cuss public health, for example, a group may state the question in any one of the following forms: What should be done about the public health situation? (statement in terms of the problem), How can medical services best be made available to all who need them? (statement in terms of the objective), Should Congress pass the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill? (statement in terms of a specific solution). In all three forms the problem (public health) is the same, but the specific question to be discussed differs. In which form the question should be stated depends, as the following pages will show, on the result of the analysis of the problem by the group.

What are the facts?—To analyze its problem the group need not have before it all the information it will need later in solving the problem. But a knowledge of some of the facts is necessary in the process of analysis itself. Let us suppose that a group is working out an agenda for a series of sessions on the question, What should be our policy toward Soviet Russia? The statement of the problem implies that not all is well in our relations with Russia. But specifically what conflicts have disturbed friendly relations? On what matters have we been at odds in the United Nations, in international conferences, and in diplomatic relations generally? Some knowledge of these facts is necessary to analysis; for these facts constitute the situation out of which the problem arises.

For a real understanding of the problem it may be necessary to look beneath the superficial facts to underlying causes. Conflict between Russia and the United States presumably arises from a clash between the foreign policies pursued by the two governments. What, then, *is* the foreign policy of the Russian government? What has been our own foreign policy? And one might attempt to probe to a still deeper level by inquiring into the motives or objectives, expressed and unexpressed, which lie back of the two policies. The facts constituting a complex situation will usually be found in layers. On the surface are those facts open to ordinary observation (if the situation has been fully and

accurately reported). A search for causes takes us to a deeper level. And so on.

How deeply should one mine for the ultimate explanatory fact? In actual practice the answer is fairly clear: Dig until fact gives way to opinion. The conflicts that trouble Russo-American relations are open to observation. So also are many of the facts regarding the policies being pursued by the two governments. But the question of what objectives lie back of those policies is for the most part a matter of opinion rather than of verifiable fact. In assembling material for use in analysis the group should not go beyond facts so easily verified that there is substantial agreement regarding them.

In addition to the principal facts out of which the problem arises the group may need to know also what limitations are placed upon it in solving the problem. A group of executives considering the adoption of a new policy for a firm, for example, will need to know what resources of money, time, clerical assistance, and the like, are available for the execution of any policy decided upon. Such conditions often provide a framework within which solution of the problem must be sought.

An examination by a group of the facts out of which the problem arises is an important part of its preliminary work. Until it knows the facts it does not really understand the problem and is in no position to discuss solutions. And occasionally, when it has assembled the facts, it finds no need to consider solutions at all; the problem proves to be less disturbing or less urgent than had been supposed.

What are the criteria?—In its search for a solution of a problem any group will be examining and evaluating one or more policies or proposals, and the question will arise, By what standard are we to evaluate the policy? This question may take various forms, depending on the nature of the problem: What values do we wish to realize or conserve in this situation? What objectives do we wish to achieve? What needs are we trying to meet? What goal are we aiming at? Any proposal the group may examine will

be a means to some end, and one cannot evaluate a means without considering the end. The end is a yardstick by which the policy can be measured. This question of criteria arises so inevitably in the search for a solution that it should receive attention during analysis of the problem.

Suppose that a neighborhood discussion group wishes to consider the question, Do we approve of the Marshall Plan? In analyzing the problem the group finds itself agreed that the objectives of the plan are to rehabilitate Europe economically and to prevent the further spread of Communism. While all agree that the first objective is sound, there is a difference of opinion over the question whether the United States should attempt to stop the spread of Communism in Europe. The group agrees regarding what the objectives of the policy are but disagrees over the soundness of one of them. The agenda must be so constructed as to raise the question of the soundness of this second objective.

In some cases there will be no difference of opinion either regarding what the objectives are or regarding their soundness. A group discussing federal aid to education may agree that the object of the proposed legislation is to strengthen the public-school system and that this objective is sound. The only question requiring detailed examination will be whether federal aid is a satisfactory, or the most satisfactory, way to strengthen the school system.

In the two cases just mentioned discussion is of a specific proposal the objectives of which are well known. This is usually the case when a group is to discuss a national or international question. But often a group will discuss a problem for which no solution has yet been advanced. A community council, for example, may have been disturbed by juvenile delinquency in the community. No remedies for the situation have yet been suggested. And there may be no agreement regarding what specific objectives should be sought. Should remedial measures be aimed at improving home conditions, at improving conditions in the

school, at strengthening the police force? A good deal depends on what are felt to be the underlying causes of the delinquency. Clearly the question of objectives calls for discussion, and the agenda should be so drawn as to raise that question.

But does any question of objectives arise in discussing such a question as this: How late should teen-age children stay out on school nights? Yes, here also; for the group will be considering various suggested rules or principles that parents might follow in granting permission to spend the evening outside of the home. In discussing such suggestions the group cannot avoid raising this question: What values do we wish to preserve here—the health of the child? his need for recreation and social life? his need to do well in school? Perhaps all of these and more. Since agreement cannot be assumed regarding the values to be conserved, the agenda should provide a place to raise this question.

While analyzing the problem, then, the group should consider whether difference of opinion is likely to arise regarding those criteria by which proposed solutions of the problem will be evaluated.

What are the possible solutions?—Committees, boards, and councils often handle problems which have not previously been discussed and for which solutions, therefore, have not yet been proposed. It will be a part of the task of the group to devise one or more possible solutions for examination and appraisal.

But most public questions which a round table may wish to discuss will already have been discussed in Congress or elsewhere. Usually one or more specific proposals are under consideration. The following problems are all of this type: public health, control of atomic energy, conservation, control of inflation. In analyzing such problems the group should, if possible, list in advance the various proposals to be examined.

In analyzing a problem, then, a group should usually raise four questions: Precisely what is the problem? What are the principal facts out of which the problem grows and what facts set limits within which a solution must be sought? By what

criteria are solutions to be evaluated? What possible solutions of the problem should be examined?

THE AGENDA

From the analysis by the group of its problem will gradually emerge the agenda. That is, it will become clear on what issues decision is necessary and on which of these issues there is a difference of opinion in the group. These latter issues must be discussed in detail. When they have been arranged in a convenient order, the group has a dependable agenda to follow. What form the agenda will take depends, of course, on what analysis of the problem has revealed. Let us consider a few typical examples in which a round table is preparing for detailed discussion of a public question.

Suppose the question to be discussed is this: Should the federal government provide financial aid to the state school systems? We will suppose that in its analysis the group has found itself in complete agreement regarding what the problem is. And there is no difference of opinion regarding the facts out of which the problem arises, that in many parts of the country school facilities and staff are inadequate because of the inability of the state to finance its schools properly. All are agreed also that the only proposal to be considered is that of federal aid, that its objective is to strengthen the school systems of the states, and that the objective is a sound one. The only question, therefore, on which there is a difference of opinion is whether federal aid would be a satisfactory way to achieve the objective.

Analysis has also made clear that in approaching this question the group will encounter two principal areas of disagreement: (1) Would federal aid actually strengthen the school systems of the states by providing better facilities and staff? and (2) Is the proposal open to serious objection on grounds apart from whether it would achieve its objective? Would it, for example, involve a dangerous degree of political control of education? And would it be unfair to the wealthier states?

The following set of questions, then, would appear to provide a workable agenda:

1. Would federal aid actually strengthen the school systems of the various states?
   a) Would it provide adequate facilities?
   b) Would it provide an adequate staff of well-trained teachers?
2. Is the proposal open to serious objection on other grounds?
   a) Would it involve a dangerous degree of political control of education?
   b) Would it be unfair to the wealthier states to tax their residents for the support of education in other states?

If the group can answer these questions to its satisfaction, it will have made up its mind on the wisdom of federal aid to education.

In the illustration just cited, analysis had revealed no difference of opinion in the group on the nature of the problem, on the principal facts surrounding it, on the objective to be achieved, or on what proposed solutions were to be examined. Often there is disagreement at one or more of these steps. If so, the agenda will be more elaborate.

Suppose, for example, that the group is to consider the question, Do we approve of the Marshall Plan? Analysis has revealed complete agreement regarding the problem which the Marshall Plan is designed to solve and regarding the principal facts out of which the problem has arisen. It is agreed also that the Marshall Plan is the only proposal to be discussed. But regarding the objectives of the plan there is some disagreement. All agree that its objectives are to rehabilitate Europe economically and to prevent the further spread of Communism, but some doubt whether the second objective is a sound one. For this group a satisfactory agenda might be as follows:

1. Should the United States attempt to prevent the further spread of Communism in Europe?

2. Will the Marshall Plan achieve its objectives?
    a) Will it rehabilitate Europe economically?
    b) Will it prevent the further spread of Communism?
3. Is it open to objection on other grounds?
    a) Will it prove too burdensome to the American people?
    b) Will it have a disastrously inflationary effect in this country?

Or take a situation in which analysis reveals an even more fundamental disagreement. Statistics have convinced the group that much illness in the United States does not receive adequate medical attention. But search for underlying causes reveals a good deal of confusion and disagreement. Is the difficulty due to lack of hospitals, to lack of trained physicians and nurses, or to the inability of families in the lower income brackets to pay for the medical services needed? Or are all of these factors operative? If the group is to discuss the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill as a solution, with some attention to alternative proposals, the agenda would take about the following form:

1. To what is failure to receive adequate medical attention due?
    a) To a lack of hospitals and clinics?
    b) To a shortage of physicians and nurses?
    c) To the inability of many families to pay for needed medical services?
2. Would the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill be a satisfactory solution of the problem?
    a) Would it correct the conditions responsible for preventable illness?
    b) Is it open to objection on other grounds?
3. Would some other plan be more satisfactory in these two respects?

From the preceding pages it will have become clear that the

process of analysis by which a group arrives at an agenda involves a preliminary exploration both of the problem itself and of the present beliefs of the group about the problem. For the purpose of analysis is to arrive at those issues which must be settled to reach a decision within the group. The agenda is a statement in interrogative form of these controversial issues.

To determine the issues the group must usually consider the following questions, noting in each case where differences of opinion exist within the group:

1. How should the question be stated and defined?
2. Out of what facts does the problem arise?
3. By what criteria are solutions to be evaluated?
4. What solutions are to be examined?

When a satisfactory agenda has been adopted, the group is ready for methodical discussion of the issues.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THINKING TOGETHER

The necessity of analyzing a problem and working out an agenda is not peculiar to group thinking. An individual attempting to solve a problem alone must understand what issues are involved before he can examine and weigh the evidence. And if the suggestions of the preceding chapter are useful to a group, they presumably are useful also to the individual thinker.

But when a group has an agenda before it and is ready to discuss the first issue, it encounters a problem peculiar to group thinking—the problem of how several persons are to think together. One virtue in group thinking is that many minds are brought to bear on the problem. Many minds mean many ideas, and many ideas should produce a sounder conclusion than few ideas. But many ideas may also produce confusion unless the group avoids trying to think about all of them at the same time. Yet this is what most groups do. As the group takes up one of the issues in its agenda, the members speak up in turn, each contributing information, suggestions, and arguments, some agreeing and some disagreeing with what others have said. As each speaks, the situation becomes more involved. Soon so many points have been made and so many reactions have been expressed to each that no one can remember what anyone else has said. The first contribution, like a pebble dropped into a pond, has set up an area of agitation that widens rapidly in all directions until soon the eye cannot take it in.

What the group needs is a method of conducting its discussion that will help each member to keep the total situation in mind as it evolves and that will enable the group to concentrate on one idea at a time. The following sequence of four steps to be followed in discussing an issue will enable a group to avoid much

of the confusion that often embarrasses group thinking: (1) exploring the issue, (2) taking stock of the situation, (3) resolving conflicts, (4) summarizing the discussion.

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

As suggested above, the tendency of any group to make contributions in a random and spontaneous fashion without any attempt to keep the situation clear, to sort out the ideas presented, or to stick to any one of them long soon results in confusion. Yet some discussion of this kind is necessary as the group takes up each new issue. For the situation with which the group must deal consists in part of the relationship between the views of the various members on the issue. Some of the ideas presented will supplement one another and can be fitted into a harmonious pattern; others will be contradictory. Until each member has expressed himself briefly, the group cannot know what situation confronts it.

At the beginning of the discussion of each issue, then, the members should speak up in rapid succession, each stating his view, perhaps indicating briefly why he believes as he does, perhaps also commenting briefly on the views expressed by other members. We shall call this the "exploratory phase" of the discussion. Its purpose is to make clear what the situation is at the beginning of the thinking of the group about the issue. To accomplish this purpose may require only two or three minutes; seldom should it require more than twenty. The mistake of many groups is to continue too long in this phase.

During the exploratory phase the group may find that the issue is too broad for convenient handling and that it would be desirable to break it down into two or more subordinate issues. If so, the first of the subordinate issues becomes the issue to be explored. When discussion of this issue has been carried through to a conclusion, the group returns to exploration of the second subordinate issue, and so on.

To illustrate the exploratory phase and subsequent steps in the

discussion of an issue let us suppose that a committee representing the village band in the town of Dorchester has met to consider how new life can be instilled into the organization. Earlier in the discussion it has been agreed that what the band needs to revive the interest of its members is new music, a more satisfactory practice room, and several new instruments, and that the problem is essentially one of raising six or seven hundred dollars for these purposes. As we look in on the meeting, the committee is taking up the issue, Could the money be raised by giving a public concert in the spring?

DALE: A public concert seems to me a good thing quite apart from its money-making possibilities. It would do a great deal to give the band standing in the community and in surrounding communities.

DENNIS: I think it would, and with a concert to look forward to, we'd all dig in and practice. We need something like that to make us buckle down.

MARCUSSEN: That may all be true enough, and I agree with you, but a public concert is a pretty ambitious project. We might clear the $600 we need—and we might lose several hundred. Have you thought of that?

ROYER: Frankly I think we'd be biting off more than we can chew. We'd have to sell six or eight hundred tickets at around a dollar apiece. That means you'd have to sell a good many out of town. We are just not that good, or if we are nobody knows it.

DENNIS: I take it Royer and Marcussen think it would be a good idea if we could swing it. (Royer and Marcussen nod assent.) Then I think we ought to give it some real consideration. "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady," as the old woman said.

DALE: I can see that we would have to sell a good many tickets out of town, and I'm beginning to feel a little dubious about it myself. But still——

At this point the exploratory phase of the discussion by the committee should be closed. It is clear about where each member stands on the issue, and the group should proceed to the second step in their discussion before the picture becomes confused.

TAKING STOCK OF THE SITUATION

When it has become clear where each member stands on the issue, it should be possible to sort the ideas presented into three groups. In the first group fall those on which there is complete agreement. These points of agreement should be formulated clearly and set aside as requiring no further discussion; to return to them continually, as groups often do, is a waste of time. In the second group fall those points on which the members are unable to come to any opinion at all because they lack the information necessary to form an opinion. If the group believes the information could be obtained, these points should be set aside for discussion at a future date when the information can be made available. To discuss them now will serve no purpose. In the third group fall those points on which there is a difference of opinion. These points of disagreement should be stated clearly, so that they can be taken up in order and threshed out thoroughly. The process of taking stock is thus essentially one of classifying the material presented in the exploratory phase of the discussion.

The exploratory discussion may of course reveal no points of agreement; it may reveal no points on which lack of information makes the formation of opinion impossible; or it may reveal no points of disagreement. If all members find themselves in complete agreement, the group will of course proceed at once to the next issue in the agenda.

Frequently when it is time to take stock of the situation it may not be perfectly clear whether there is disagreement on a particular point. If so, the chairman, or some member, should put a direct question to the member about whose opinion there is doubt to make sure whether disagreement exists.

In the committee discussion we are here using as an illustration, the stock-taking process is a simple one:

DENNIS: I wonder if we can't clear the air a little before we get any deeper into the discussion. Just how do we stand on this?

DALE: The situation is about this, isn't it? We are agreed that giving a public concert would have the advantages of building up the band's reputation and of providing a needed incentive to do better work. But we are disagreed over whether it would be possible to raise the six hundred dollars in this way.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

As the group takes up in turn each of the points on which there is difference of opinion, it will need a sense of method if any progress is to be made in resolving the conflicts. Too often what happens is that each of the two members in disagreement simply restates and again restates his view with mounting emphasis, and what began as a conflict of opinion degenerates into a conflict of will. Acrimonious repetition of what has already been said never resolves a conflict.

The chance of reaching agreement is often good, however, if the two members at odds can be brought to present their supporting reasons step by step and to criticize each other's reasons as they do so. Suppose, for example, that Smith and Brown are in disagreement. Brown, instead of repeating his point, gives one of the main reasons why he thinks as he does. Smith replies with a criticism of the reason. To this Brown replies by commenting on Smith's reaction to his argument.

This mutual criticism of each other's supporting arguments usually produces two useful results. For one thing, it soon makes clear just why Brown and Smith disagree, and this is worth while even when no further progress can be made. But often further progress is possible. For soon Brown is likely to say, "I see Smith

has a real objection there. I don't think it applies to what I meant to say. I'm afraid I didn't express myself very clearly. Let me put my point this way." And he restates his position, retaining the gist of what he meant to say but freeing it somewhat from Smith's objection. Actually he usually is modifying his position, though he may not realize it.

And Smith, too, is likely to say soon, "I think my objection to Brown's point sounded a little more sweeping than I intended. What I meant was this." And he restates his own position, consciously or unconsciously modifying it as he does so. This progressive modification of the opposing positions brings the two members closer and closer together. More often than one might expect, it brings them completely together. And when complete agreement cannot be achieved, it is often possible to narrow the area of disagreement to a single disputed question of fact with a fair prospect that when the fact is found, complete agreement will result.

This process of examining the supporting arguments back of a conflict of opinion may be illustrated from the committee discussion of the proposed band concert in Dorchester:

MARCUSSEN: Why do I think we can't do it? Because it is clear we would have to sell six or eight hundred tickets, many of them out of town, and I don't think the band has that much appeal. Our free open-air concerts during the summer are well attended locally. But I don't think we have enough to offer to attract many from out of town.

DENNIS: Maybe not if the concert is to consist entirely of band numbers, but couldn't we have a few added attractions that would draw?

MARCUSSEN: What, for instance?

DENNIS: For one thing, suppose we hire for the occasion three or four players from the City Symphony Orchestra to fill in at certain points where we are admittedly weak, say a solo trumpet, a trombone, and two good clarinetists to strengthen

the reed section. With this help we could present some classical or semiclassical numbers that would be something new around here.

DALE: If we are to bring in outside help, how about a few solo numbers? Mrs. Corey lives right here in the village. I imagine we could get her to present a soprano solo with band accompaniment. I know she is interested in the band, and I think she would help and not charge us too much either.

MARCUSSEN: I'll admit this looks pretty good. If we bring in Mrs. Corey and several professionals from the city, we'd have something that would appeal. But this will cost a couple of hundred dollars, I suppose. Now you'll have to sell a thousand tickets!

DENNIS: I think we could do it.

ROYER: Maybe so. I'd go along if I were sure we could get the outside help for, say, not more than two hundred dollars.

MARCUSSEN: I'd agree, too, I think, on those terms.

DALE: Then why not have Marcussen, our business manager, see what it would cost to put on such a concert?

SUMMARIZING THE DISCUSSION

When all points of disagreement have been threshed out thoroughly, the chairman should sum up the discussion. The summary should not be a tedious review of the arguments presented but a brief statement of the results of the discussion. After restating the issue that has been under discussion, the chairman should enumerate the points on which the group was agreed at the end of the exploratory phase; he should enumerate the points on which the members were undecided because information was lacking and mention what provision has been made to obtain the needed information; and he should enumerate the points of disagreement encountered and the progress, if any, made in resolving the conflicts. The entire summary should seldom require more than three or four sentences.

In the illustration being followed here the summary might run as follows:

> DALE: On this question of whether the needed money could be raised by a public concert in the spring, then, what we have arrived at is this: We are agreed that such a concert would have the advantages of building up the reputation of the band and providing an incentive to the members. There was at first some disagreement over whether the money could be raised by a concert, but the committee now believes the proposal would be feasible if the outside help we would need did not cost too much. Marcussen is to find out what it would cost to put on a concert with this outside help.

Group thinking would be greatly facilitated if all members of the group kept in mind the series of steps outlined in this chapter. Most people find it difficult to do this while immersed in the discussion, and in actual practice the group depends a good deal on the guidance of its moderator. In a later chapter we shall return to the problem while discussing the function of the moderator in group thinking.

CHAPTER SIX

PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSION

Mapping the problem and thinking together on the issues making up the agenda are activities of the group as a whole, and we have discussed them without specific reference to the individual. But the success of group thinking obviously depends very much upon how effectively the members contribute and how skillfully the leader moderates the discussion. In this and the following chapter we shall look at group discussion from the point of view first of the participant and then of the moderator.

That some people are more useful members of a committee or round table than others is too obvious to need emphasis. Anyone who has often served on committees will testify that some few persons are invaluable at the conference table. Others contribute little, while still others are positive nuisances.

To the question, What makes a good committee member? there are of course many answers. Knowledge of the matter under discussion, a quick mind, sound judgment, and verbal facility are all important. The first can be acquired by anyone who will take the trouble to inform himself, and any participant in discussion should be willing to make this effort. There is little one can do about the second except to cultivate a habit of mental alertness, while soundness of judgment and skill in expression are the result of experience and long practice. If we confine our attention to those matters on which rapid improvement is possible, we shall find that a committee member's value depends primarily on his attitudes and on what may be called his discussion habits. Both the attitudes and the habits favorable to effective participation can be cultivated successfully if one makes the effort and knows what to aim at. Let us consider first the attitudes of the participant.

ATTITUDES

The close cooperation required in group thinking occurs only in an atmosphere of good will. It follows that each member's attitude toward his colleagues should be one of friendliness and courtesy. We do not open our minds freely unless we feel that we are among friends, and stiffness, formality, or pomposity chills the atmosphere and freezes discussion. Still more destructive of congeniality is open hostility or loss of temper; either makes fruitful discussion impossible. The committee member needs the imperturbable good humor and unfailing courtesy of the trained diplomat.

Toward the ideas presented in discussion the desirable attitude is open-mindedness. Often the member will have an opinion on the question before the discussion starts, and it is not to be expected that he will check his opinion at the door on entering the committee room. Nor need he feel that he cannot defend his opinion earnestly and forthrightly; frankness is necessary to profitable discussion. At the same time no cooperative thinking is possible if the question is closed in the minds of some of the members before discussion starts. We should hold our opinions tentatively and be willing to reopen the question, giving sympathetic consideration to any new light that may be thrown on it.

So far as is humanly possible our attitude in discussion should be that of the inquirer rather than of the advocate. When the group quickly polarizes into two debate teams, each committed in advance to a particular conclusion and bent on bearing the other down by the weight of numbers or argument, little group thinking can take place. Each member should feel that what he says is off the record, that sticking to one's guns in spite of the evidence is a fault rather than a virtue, and that the only man who never changes his mind is the one who never thinks.

Toward the discussion as a whole the member's attitude should be one of lively and sympathetic interest. And he should show his interest. The fishy eye, the poker face, the wooden voice, and the distant manner are enemies of good discussion. It should be

apparent to our colleagues that we are keenly interested in the problem before them and wish to cooperate actively in the search for a solution satisfactory to the entire group.

We sometimes speak of a certain person as having an ideal personality for committee work. But do we mean anything more than that he is friendly and courteous toward other members of the group, that he is hospitable to new ideas, and that he displays keen interest in the business before the committee? We need not surrender too easily to the mystery of personality. The attitudes that make for effective participation can be developed by nearly anyone who is willing to take himself in hand.

DISCUSSION HABITS

Certain habits of thought and speech are favorable to good discussion. Not all possess these habits, but practically anyone can acquire them if he understands what they are and is willing to discipline himself in discussion. Among the more important are those suggested below.

Speak up!—Cooperative thinking is possible only when mind reacts to mind—and mind reading is a lost art. The member of the group must, so to speak, think aloud so that others may know what is going on in his mind. It is a mistake to suppose that he should speak only when he has a new idea or argument to present. He should speak also to let the group know how he is reacting to the ideas and arguments presented by others. If he speaks infrequently or only when called upon by the chairman, he slows up the discussion. General and lively participation facilitates group thinking.

Don't interrupt!—The suggestion that one should participate freely does not mean that he should interrupt others. When two are talking at the same time, nothing useful is happening, and the person with a low emotional boiling point who constantly interrupts may easily become a nuisance. If the idea the member wishes to express is worth presenting at all, a delay of a few seconds will not detract from its value.

Follow the ball!—Effective participation is not merely self-expression; it involves bridling the impulse to give voice immediately to whatever idea comes to mind without regard to whether it will advance the discussion. The desire merely to get something off one's chest must be curbed if discussion is to make any progress.

The thoughtful member of a discussion group keeps his eye on the agenda and remembers what issue is at the moment under discussion; he listens carefully to what the other fellow is saying and makes the effort necessary to understand him; and when he speaks, he speaks to the point. During the exploratory phase of discussion of an issue, he sticks to that issue, expressing his own view on it or commenting on the views that have been expressed by others. When the group is attempting to resolve a conflict of opinion, his contribution usually expresses his reaction to what the last speaker has said. In this phase discussion is much like a game of tennis; the speaker should return the ball that comes over the net toward him, not some other ball he has been hiding in his pocket. To keep his bearings during discussion the participant may find it useful to take notes of the kind suggested for the moderator in the next chapter.

Be brief!—Typically discussion takes the form of conversation rather than of an exchange of long statements. Seldom should a contribution be more than a few sentences in length, and often a few words are sufficient. The long contributions that slow up progress are sometimes due to sheer verbosity; many words are used to say what could have been said more clearly in a few words. Terseness is a virtue, for unnecessary words usually cloud the point. Or the unduly long contribution may result from the speaker's attempt to present a series of points. Usually one point only should be presented in each contribution; if several are presented at the same time, the attempt on the part of the group to discuss all of them together breeds confusion. The member who insists on presenting several points in the same contribution often is an experienced public speaker suffering from a common

occupational disease of the orator—the inability to break up what he has to say into the small units appropriate for discussion. Be brief, then, in the sense of presenting one point at a time and of expressing that point as tersely as possible.

Avoid name calling!—Some persons have a habit of so expressing themselves as to arouse hostility or opposition which the idea expressed would not itself have encountered. They refer to liberals, for example, as "pinks" or to conservatives as "reactionaries" or "fascists." In discussion we should avoid all name calling words and other language tinged with emotion; it is likely to set off a chain reaction of recrimination that will make the subject too hot to handle. The use of such language may spring from an attitude of hostility, but often it is only a verbal habit of which the user is quite unaware. In discussion we may speak frankly and earnestly, but so far as possible we should use language that does not arouse unnecessary opposition to the ideas expressed.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

MODERATING DISCUSSION

No orchestra attempts to play a symphony without a conductor to coordinate and direct its efforts. Nor does a discussion group, if it is wise, attempt to solve a problem without a moderator to guide its thinking. Without him the group is helpless. Though the leader usually makes no contribution to the substance of the argument, his services as coordinator and director are essential to group thinking.

The importance of the moderator arises from the fact that in group thinking several minds are cooperating in a joint enterprise. To act together and to react upon each other the minds must think aloud. This immediately creates a traffic problem. If each member speaks as the spirit moves him, some will speak often, others not at all; or several will talk at the same time. And an arrangement by which each takes his turn in rotation is much too mechanical for the informal give-and-take of group thinking. What is needed is a traffic officer who stands outside of the argument but follows it closely enough to see who should have the floor next.

Difficulty will arise also from the desire of each member to discuss whatever point happens to interest him most at the moment. With each member hot upon the trail of his own idea, the attention of the group will seldom remain focused long on any one point unless someone makes it his business to direct attention to that point. And unless discussion can be focused on one point at a time, no progress toward a conclusion is possible.

There is need, too, for someone not a party to the argument to keep an eye on the developing situation as a whole, for each member of the group is too intent on the point he is making or criticizing to keep the total picture in view. Of necessity he takes a worm's-eye rather than a bird's-eye view of the scene. Without a

leader the group soon loses its sense of direction; and even when it sticks to a point long enough to explore it thoroughly, the group is often at a loss to know "where we go from here."

The dependence of the group on a moderator argues no lack of mental capacity on the part of its members. The need arises from the nature of group thinking itself. Several minds cannot cooperate effectively in discussion without someone to coordinate their efforts, and failure is almost assured when the group does not realize that it needs a moderator or when the moderator does not understand his function.

To moderate discussion well is an exacting task, requiring mental alertness, emotional maturity, and a sense of method. But the necessary attitudes are neither mysterious nor rare, and the method can be learned. In the following pages attention will be directed to some of the attitudes desirable in a discussion leader's personality and to the specific functions the leader must perform if group thinking is to be profitable.

THE LEADER'S PERSONALITY

The good discussion leader is a genial, friendly person, courteous and considerate to the members of his group and genuinely interested in them as persons. Regarding them as his guests, he tries to make each feel that he is among friends and that whatever he contributes is valued. For it is the leader's special responsibility to create and maintain the atmosphere of good will essential to group thinking. To succeed not only must he himself be a person of good will; he must possess the patience and tact to allay the ill will sometimes created by others. No matter how annoying a member may be, the leader must remain imperturbably good-humored if he is to keep conversation on the level where profitable exchange of ideas is possible.

But the effective leader is interested not only in the members of his group as persons; he is interested also in the question discussed, in the ideas and suggestions presented, and in the orderly progress of the discussion toward a conclusion. And he shows his

interest. If an apathetic group member handicaps the discussion, an apathetic leader is likely to kill it. The leader's face, voice, and manner should suggest keen interest in the discussion and genuine concern that it make progress. Enthusiasm is contagious, and the leader should have an inexhaustible supply of it.

Toward the ideas presented in discussion the leader's attitude should be one of strict impartiality. He cannot afford to compromise his position as moderator by becoming a party to the argument. Usually he should even avoid revealing what his own opinion is on the question under discussion. To take sides in the argument is to vacate the moderator's chair, and the group cannot function effectively without its moderator. The leader is performing a professional service for the group in assisting it to explore the problem thoroughly and to think its way through to a conclusion that its members find satisfactory. Whether the moderator approves of the conclusion is immaterial.

Insistence upon the moderator's impartiality does not imply, however, that he cannot call the attention of the group to facts it is overlooking. Nor does it imply that he cannot invite consideration of argument being ignored. He may say, for example, "You seem agreed on this point, but what would you say to those who argue this way?" and he states the point that he feels should be examined. He takes care not to present it as his own or to criticize the group for rejecting it. If they examine the point fairly, he is satisfied.

Finally, an attitude of responsibility is characteristic of the good discussion leader. This may seem to have been implied in what has already been said, but the point will bear emphasizing. Too many moderators apparently feel that their only task is to keep the discussion going. When a lively exchange is in progress they settle back to take a rest until the discussion threatens to stall. This will hardly do. The leader must help the group think its problem through. As will appear later in this chapter, he has many functions to perform. To perform them well he must follow every turn of the argument with the closest attention, ready to

step in immediately when his assistance is required. Make no mistake about it, moderating discussion well is exacting work.

So far as personality is concerned, then, the genial, interested, impartial, and responsible person is the one most likely to succeed as a discussion leader.

THE LEADER'S FUNCTION

It is of course possible to possess the attitudes favorable to good leadership and yet know little of the leader's duties. That he has specific functions to perform in the process of group thinking is verified daily in the observation and experience of those who conduct much business at the conference table. It is somewhat difficult to discuss the leader's functions in sufficient detail to be helpful without making them seem mechanical. Alert and sensitive adaptation to the shifting situation is always required. But beneath the adaptation and improvisation one can usually see the experienced leader doing certain things essential to the success of the discussion. In the following paragraphs five specific functions of the moderator will be suggested.

Regulating the discussion.—The moderator's most elementary function is to regulate the discussion in such a way that all members participate equally and without interfering with each other. He is, in short, a traffic officer. In practice, to discharge this function well is not so simple as it sounds.

Nearly every group has one or two members who talk too often, too long, or at the wrong time. Some of them are people with low emotional boiling points who break into speech on slight provocation. The impatient member may have the annoying habit of interrupting others. When such interruptions occur frequently, they try the patience of other members and embarrass discussion. If the member who is interrupted stops talking, he is likely to feel annoyed; if he does not stop talking, the resulting confusion wastes time. Or the offending member, though he does not interrupt, may speak so frequently that soon he is monopolizing the conversation. Confronted with problems of this kind,

the leader may find it necessary to ask members to raise their hands when they wish to speak. He will then recognize first those who have talked least often, unless at the time there is some special reason why one member should do more than his share of the talking. Most leaders would prefer to avoid even this slight formality, but it is less objectionable than allowing a few members to monopolize the conversation or to interrupt constantly.

Another troublesome member is the one who cannot say anything in less than 10 minutes and would prefer half an hour. Often he is having difficulty in expressing himself. After stating his point he feels he has not made it clear; so he states it again and still again. By the time he finishes, the point has been lost in a cloud of words. Before allowing discussion to proceed, the leader should restate the point clearly and tersely. To allow the group to react to the contribution without understanding it invites confusion.

Sometimes the speaker's difficulty is that he does not understand the point himself and is thinking aloud as he tries to formulate it. If so, the leader may sharpen the speaker's thinking by putting a question to him. Occasionally the leader, who is usually familiar with the arguments on the subject, grasps the point before the speaker himself does. If so, he may say, "Is this what you mean?" and then state the point himself. In situations of this kind the moderator should assume that the point may be important and should help the speaker in any way that he can. He should never betray impatience at the speaker's inability to make himself clear.

The unduly long contribution is sometimes due not to verbosity or inability to express oneself, but to the desire to present more than one point. The member has a number of related points in mind and would like to present them in a single statement. At times an extended statement may be desirable, but usually discussion will proceed more rapidly if one point is presented at a time, so that the group can comment on it before it has been forgotten. When a speaker has presented a point and is launching

into another with the apparent intention of delivering a speech, the leader should interrupt with some such remark as this: "I see that you have more argument to present, but suppose we take it one point at a time, commenting on each point as you go along." He should not fail later to return to the speaker for the rest of his argument.

The private whispered conversations that sometimes spring up must be dealt with lest they split the group into fragments. If the leader interrupts the general discussion, the whispered conversation is usually terminated abruptly. If it is not, the leader may say, "I wonder if all of us shouldn't be in on the point you are making. What is it?" In most cases the private conversation turns out to have been entirely relevant. The offending member had a point to make but was too shy to speak out; so he turned to his neighbor with it. What the leader needs in a situation of this kind is a combination of good-humored firmness and a light touch.

The reticent member also may present a problem. Does he really have nothing to say, or is he only shy? Not much can be done about the member who has nothing to say. In a practical working committee, he contributes nothing and is so much dead weight—though he may be profiting personally. In a community round table there are often a few members who contribute little or nothing but feel that they get a good deal from listening to the others. If there are not too many of them, they do no harm and should not be made to feel unwelcome.

But one should not take it for granted that the less talkative member has nothing to say. When he has overcome his shyness, he may prove to be the best informed and most thoughtful member of the group. Such a person will usually respond to a direct question or to a request for his opinion on the point under discussion. And when he has heard his own voice a few times and feels more at home, he may participate freely enough.

In moderating discussion for a group whose members are unaccustomed to talking in public, it may be necessary to break

an initial crust of shyness before any discussion at all can be started. The leader may go the rounds, asking each in turn to express his opinion. When conflicting opinions have been expressed, he encourages those in disagreement to elaborate their views and reply to each other's arguments. A lively discussion will soon be under way. One should not be disturbed if some of the first contributions are irrelevant or unimpressive. The object at the moment is to get any kind of discussion started. It can later be given direction and depth.

Asking individual members for expressions of opinion should never be regarded as more than a device for breaking the ice. Some leaders employ it habitually, so that what should be discussion among the members becomes a cross-examination of the group by the leader. The leader should not be satisfied until he has a lively exchange going on among the members themselves.

Focusing the discussion.—If the members of the group supply the ammunition in discussion, it is the leader's job to keep the weapon trained on the target. It is not enough that members stick to the general subject under discussion; their attention must be kept focused on the specific point at the moment under consideration, a much more difficult task. The leader may ignore some irrelevant remarks; often they do not tempt the group from its task. But if others follow the wandering member off into the underbrush, the leader must bring them back. Unless attention can be kept to the specific point under consideration long enough to thresh it out and bring it to a conclusion, no decision can be reached.

The average person's apparent inability to follow discussion and stick to the point may at first astonish and then exasperate the inexperienced leader. "How can Jones fail to see," he may exclaim to himself, "that his contribution has no bearing on the point Brown has just made or on the situation as it stood at the conclusion of Brown's remarks?" Usually the explanation is that Jones simply was not listening to Brown; he was busy deciding

what he would say when Brown had finished. The ability to follow the ball in discussion is comparatively rare, and the leader will sometimes feel that he spends most of his time setting discussion back on the track.

A tactful way to check the tendency to wander is to ask the member whose remark seems irrelevant, "Can you make more clear to us how your point bears on the issue we are now discussing?" If the remark is irrelevant, the member is usually willing to drop it. Often it is relevant to some phase of the problem not then under consideration. If so, the leader should assure the speaker that it will be taken up later, and should take care to return to it at the appropriate time.

How sharply the leader can keep discussion focused on each point as it is considered depends a good deal on the size of the group and on how accustomed its members are to thinking together. The larger the group, the more difficult it will be to keep attention focused, especially if its members are unaccustomed to discussion. Sometimes the leader will feel that the best he can do is to keep discussion to each major subdivision of the problem in turn without attempting to focus attention on each minor issue that comes up. He will learn only by experience how to steer a safe course between letting the discussion run wild and making a pedantic nuisance of himself.

Guiding the discussion.—Discussion that is well regulated and focused may still make little progress unless the moderator guides the discussion in several ways. However pertinent and well informed the discussion is on particular points, the group will not arrive at any destination unless it can maintain a sense of direction, an awareness of the over-all pattern to which its discussion should conform.

Specifically, the group must keep in view the agenda indicating the major issues to be examined. In examining any one of the issues it must usually follow the steps suggested in Chapter 5: Exploration of the issue, taking stock of the situation, resolution of conflicts, and summary. And in threshing out any conflict of

opinion, discussion must be directed to the mutual examination and criticism of supporting arguments. Very few groups can keep their bearings in these three respects without the guidance of a leader; each member is too intent upon the point being made at the moment to keep the total picture in mind. It is peculiarly the leader's responsibility to keep the broader picture in mind, to keep his bearings in the welter of detailed discussion, and to provide the group with a sense of direction.

Clarifying the discussion.—The individual thinker, however skilled, is in constant danger of lapsing into confusion. His attention wanders; his map of the problem he is exploring wavers before his eyes and fades like a mirage; his ideas lose their sharpness and melt into a confused heap. To make any progress he must repeatedly pull himself up short and redirect his efforts. How much greater is the danger of confusion when several are working together on a problem! But how can a group pull itself up short to clarify its thinking? It cannot. That must be done for it by the moderator. He is, among other things, the clarifier of group thinking.

Need will arise frequently to clarify or interpret a member's contribution to the rest of the group. We have already noted the difficulty a member often has in stating his point clearly. He obscures it in a cloud of words or uses language so inexpertly that his hearers are left in the dark; sometimes he does not understand the point clearly himself. To avoid confusion the leader must step in to rephrase the point, to sharpen the speaker's thinking with a few well-directed questions, or to state the point himself if he believes he understands it better than the speaker does. Not until the point is clear to the group can discussion proceed without danger of confusion.

But obscure contributions are not the only source of confusion in discussion. Frequently the situation itself becomes confused, and members look at each other blankly as someone inquires, "Well, where are we now, anyway?" To this question the moderator should always have the answer. As pilot of the ship he

should keep his bearings; he should know where the ship is and in what direction it should now steer.

The group, for example, may have lost track of its agenda or may have lost its bearings in the discussion of a particular issue, though all are clear regarding what issue is under consideration. In the following passage the moderator responds to a typical request for clarification.

> MEMBER: I'm becoming a little confused. What are we supposed to be talking about now?
>
> MODERATOR: The discussion *has* become rather mixed up, hasn't it? You'll remember that in our discussion of whether we favor federal aid to education we were to consider three main issues: Do the states need federal aid? Would the present bill provide the aid needed? And is the bill's provision for allocation of funds sound? We have agreed that the aid is needed and that this bill would provide it. In exploring the third issue we found ourselves agreeing that the funds would not be allocated among the states strictly according to need and that we disapprove of this. We were disagreed as to whether white and colored pupils would benefit equally from the funds and are now trying to reach a conclusion on that point.

Confusion is always likely to arise during the exploratory phase of discussion of an issue, when the group is trying to find out where its members stand. This is especially true if the moderator has too long delayed taking stock of the situation. The leader should know which members have not yet made their stand clear, and if the situation has become confused, he should ask them for an expression of opinion so that he can take stock of the situation and sort out the points of agreement and disagreement.

When two members are threshing out a point of disagreement, the discussion may reach a baffling impasse in which no progress

is being made, though no one can quite see why. The following passage illustrates the situation.

THOMAS: The trouble with this plan of socialized medicine is that as soon as you adopt it the quality of the doctor's work will suffer.

WALTON: What reason do you have for thinking so?

THOMAS: Why, under this plan the doctor will receive a fixed income.

WALTON: He'll get a fixed income, yes. But how does that prove his work will suffer?

THOMAS: It's bound to. Here's the way the bill reads: "Each physician employed under the system will receive–"

WALTON (interrupting): I'm not arguing about that. I admit the doctor gets a fixed income.

Obviously this conversation is getting nowhere. The difficulty is that Thomas has stated only a part of his argument. The complete argument would run as follows: The doctor's work will suffer, because a fixed income destroys the incentive to do good work, and under this plan the doctor would have a fixed income. Thomas has left the first of the two supporting statements unexpressed. It is this unexpressed point that Walton apparently wishes to challenge, but since the point was not expressed he cannot see how to reply to the argument. The moderator should step in to clarify the situation:

MODERATOR (to Thomas): The only reason you give for thinking the doctor's work would suffer is that he would receive a fixed income, but don't you mean to say also that a fixed income would destroy his incentive to do good work?

THOMAS: Of course.

MODERATOR: And I take it, Walton, that it's this last point you object to?

WALTON: Yes, I don't believe income is the doctor's chief incentive; he's a professional man, not a businessman.

MODERATOR: Then it's the importance of the doctor's income as an incentive that we ought to be discussing.

There is perhaps no surer mark of the expert moderator than his ability to unravel a snarl of this kind by directing attention to the unexpressed premises of an argument. To see quickly what those premises are often requires some knowledge of the structure of argument. The service the moderator can render at this point is so important that the next chapter will be devoted to an elementary discussion of the structure of argument.

Pointing up the discussion.—A mason does not consider his work finished until he has "pointed it up" by running the point of his trowel along the crevices between the bricks to indent the mortar slightly at the joints. The bricklayer points up masonry to improve its appearance. The moderator points up discussion to achieve clarity.

A discussion should have joints and they should be apparent. The division of the entire discussion into sections, each devoted to one of the major issues in the agenda, should be clear. As each issue is taken up, the moderator should state it clearly in interrogative form. If the discussion is long and involved, he may occasionally restate it. During discussion of the issue he will employ brief summary and transitional remarks to distinguish the different phases of the discussion: Exploration of the issue, taking stock of the situation, and resolution of conflicts. When discussion of the issue has been completed, he will sum up the result in a few terse sentences and provide a transition to the next issue. At the close of the session he will make a 3- or 4-minute summary of the entire discussion. This summary should not be a detailed review of all the arguments presented. It should rather restate the principal issues that have been examined and indicate what conclusions, if any, have been reached.

When discussion is pointed up carefully, there is never any

doubt as to what at the moment is under discussion, nor as to when discussion of the preceding point was terminated or with what result. At the close of the discussion everyone should be able to recall what issues have been discussed and what conclusions have been reached. The untidiness and apparent futility that sensible people often object to in discussion are due in large part to the moderator's failure to point up the discussion.

TAKING NOTES

By this time it will have occurred to the reader that if the moderator is to keep discussion focused, to guide and clarify it when necessary, and to point it up, he either will need a phenomenal memory or will be obliged to take notes. Most inexperienced leaders rely on memory during the first session or two and then begin to experiment with methods of note taking.

The leader's first attempt to take notes is usually disappointing. He finds his attention so fully occupied with moderating the discussion that he has little time for anything else. One thing becomes clear at once: He cannot possibly jot down all of the many arguments presented. Fortunately he need not do so. What he needs is a brief record indicating clearly and at a glance what issues have been discussed and with what result. With practice he will find it possible to take notes of this kind without unduly distracting his attention from the discussion. In working out his own method the inexperienced leader may find the following suggestions helpful.

Before the discussion begins, set down the agenda on one or two large sheets of paper, stating each issue interrogatively in the fewest possible words and leaving plenty of space between the statements of the issues. As the group explores one of the issues, jot down in a word or two each of the points on which there is agreement, with a check mark after each to indicate agreement. Set down also a word or two followed by an interrogation point to indicate each of the points of conflict revealed during the exploratory period. All of these entries should be

indented somewhat to make clear that the points of agreement and disagreement were brought out in discussion of that particular issue in the agenda. Before the points of agreement and disagreement have been brought out clearly, it may become clear that the major issue should be subdivided. If so, write down with indentation the subordinate issues and proceed with each as suggested above.

As each point of conflict is threshed out, write down after your brief statement of it such words as "yes," "no," or "undecided" to indicate what disposition was made of the point. Similar words may be written after your statement of the main issue when its discussion has been completed. The leader's notes covering the illustrative passage with which this chapter closes would look somewhat as follows:

3. Ban Party?
    Banning un-American?—*No*
        Don't ban because disagree with party's ideas ✓
        Ban if conspiring seize government ✓
        Ban if agent foreign power ✓
        Is party conspiring to seize government?—*Probably*
        Is party agent of foreign power?—*Undecided*
    Banning strengthen or weaken party?

The "No" was of course written after "Banning un-American?" at the close of discussion of that issue.

The leader will find that with practice he can set down notes of this kind quickly and almost without looking at the paper. At any point in the discussion a glance at the paper will indicate what is at the moment under consideration, and at the close of the session the moderator can make a brief summary from his notes, indicating what issues and subordinate points have been considered and what disposition was made of each.

THE MODERATOR AT WORK

Skill in using the methods suggested in this chapter is acquired

best by experience. But observation is also a good teacher, and the following annotated passage may serve to illustrate the use of some of the suggestions made in the preceding pages. The discussion occurred in a high-school class in social studies at the last of three sessions devoted to consideration of the question, What should be our policy on Communist activities in the United States? The teacher is acting as moderator.

	COMMENT
TEACHER: In our two previous sessions we discussed Communist activities in labor unions and in government offices. Our conclusion was that while unions should rid themselves of Communist leadership, we do not favor any law forcing them to do so. And we thought that the loyalty test now being applied to government employees will prevent a dangerous amount of Communist activity in government. We come now to the last question in our agenda: Should the American Communist party be banned? What do you think about it, John?	*The leader summarizes the previous discussion and states the issue to be examined next.*
JOHN: Certainly it should be banned. We've let the Communists go too far already.	*The group explores the issue.*
HELEN: But if you ban the Communists, the next thing	

you know someone will want to ban the Democratic party. It's against our principles to ban any political party.

CARL: If you ban the Communists, you'll drive them underground. That would only strengthen them.

JOHN: How could it? They could no longer have candidates or make campaign speeches. That would put a stop to a lot of their propaganda.

CLARA: Helen says we shouldn't ban any political party. But is the Communist party really a political party?

HELEN: Of course it is. It has a platform and candidates like any other party.

TEACHER: It seems to me we have two different questions here: Would it be contrary to American principles to ban the Communist party? and Would it be expedient to ban it? Let's take them one at a time. Suppose we consider, first, whether it would violate democratic principles to ban the party.

The leader subdivides the issue and invites exploration of the first of the subordinate issues.

JOHN: I don't see anything un-American in banning an or-

ganization that is trying its best to overthrow the American government. Where will democracy be if that happens? And another thing: Why should we let Joe Stalin send a lot of spies over here to carry out his orders? And then we say we can't do anything about it because it is a political party!

CARL: Now wait a minute! How do you know the Communist party is planning to seize the government? I doubt it. And how do you know the party takes orders from Moscow? I doubt that too.

HELEN: I doubt it, too, but I'd agree that democratic principles wouldn't require us to tolerate an organization that takes orders from Russia or is trying to overthrow the government. I wouldn't call that a real political party.

TEACHER: Where do you stand on this, Clara?

The moderator draws out a taciturn member.

CLARA: Well, I don't think we should do anything to the Communist party, or any other party, just because we don't like its ideas. That would certainly be un-American.

JOHN: I'd agree with that ordinarily, but what if its idea is to overthrow the government?

CLARA: In that case, yes; or if it takes orders from Russia. But you haven't proved that.

CARL: I think John is taking too much for granted here. Sure, ban the party if it takes orders from Moscow, and ban it if it is really planning to overthrow the government. But how about proof on these points? It's like saying we should send more troops to Germany because the Russians are going to seize the whole country, but how do you know Russia is going to seize all of Germany? I don't think she is.

JOHN: I think there is plenty of proof of it. Isn't she getting up a Russian-controlled German army in her part of Germany?

TEACHER: I don't see how Russia's plans in Germany have anything to do with whether it would be un-American to ban the Communist party. What is the connection?

John is not following the ball. The leader recalls discussion to the point at issue.

JOHN: Not much maybe, but Carl brought it up.

CARL: I was just using it as an illustration.

TEACHER: All right, let's get back to the point.

HELEN: I agree with Clara that we shouldn't ban a party just because we don't like its ideas. But if it isn't really a political party the way we mean in this country, that is a different thing. I don't think we should allow a party to represent a foreign government or try to overthrow our own government.

CARL: I'd agree with that.

TEACHER: I think it's clear now about where we stand on the issue. You all seem to agree on these points: That it would be against American principles to ban a party just because we don't agree with its ideas, but that this principle ought not to hold if it can be shown that the party is an agent of a foreign government or is planning to seize our own government by force. And we seem to disagree on two points: Does the American Communist party really plan to over-

The leader interrupts discussion to take stock of the situation so that attention can be concentrated on the points of conflict.

throw the government by force? and Is it really an agent of the Russian government? Let's take these two points one at a time. And let's begin with this one: Does the party really plan to overthrow the government by force?

JOHN: I think it does.

The group now attempts to resolve the first conflict.

CARL: But just because you think so doesn't make it so.

JOHN: How can you think anything else?

TEACHER: Suppose, John, you give us one of your reasons for thinking the party has such plans.

John and Carl are making no progress in resolving the conflict, and the leader probes for supporting arguments.

JOHN: Well, don't they admit it? For instance, Communists have admitted it before the Thomas Investigating Committee.

CARL: But the people giving that testimony were ex-Communists. They had no authority to speak for the party. I'll admit that what they said makes me a little suspicious, but still that's not official.

JOHN: Well, then, what about the platform of the party in the last election? That ought to be official enough.

HELEN: You can't prove anything that way. They were in the Wallace party. I mean, the Communists said they would vote for Wallace, and I suppose they did. At least they didn't vote for a Communist. There's nothing about revolution in the Progressive party.

TEACHER: I'm not sure I follow you. Do you mean that the Communists had no platform of their own in that election and that the Progressive party platform, which they supported, contains no reference to revolution?

The leader clarifies and restates an obscure contribution before permitting discussion to continue.

HELEN: Yes, that's it.

JOHN: I guess you're right about that. But doesn't the party have a constitution or something?

CLARA: Yes, it does, and I read it once. It doesn't say anything definitely about seizing the government by force.

TEACHER: Do you agree, then, that so far as its official statements are concerned, there is no proof that the party plans to seize the government by force? (All nod assent.)

The leader points up the discussion.

HELEN: But does that settle it?

Naturally they wouldn't admit it in official statements.

JOHN: Well, look at what the Communist party has done in other countries when it had a chance. Take Czechoslovakia, for instance, or Yugoslavia, or any of those countries. The Communists take over, and that's the end of freedom and democracy. The Communist party always does that. It's the party line. They don't try it of course until they think they're strong enough. Someday they might be strong enough here. That's the day they are waiting for.

TEACHER: To put it in a nutshell, the Communist party here would seize the government if it could, because it has done so in Europe. Is that it?

John has obscured his point in a cloud of words. The leader restates it for him.

JOHN: Yes.

CARL: But there was no shooting when they took over in Czechoslovakia. Is that violent revolution?

HELEN: No shooting maybe, but there was certainly a show of force, and the opposition was liquidated right

away. I'd call that using force.

CARL: I suppose so. But how do you know the American Communist party would do that?

CLARA: You can't know for sure, but I think they probably would.

CARL: Maybe so. It sounds reasonable.

TEACHER (glancing around the group): Do the rest of you agree with Carl and Clara? (All nod assent though somewhat reluctantly.) I take it, then, that you think the American Communist party probably does hope someday to seize the government by force though there is no way to prove it positively. Let's look now at the point we postponed a few minutes ago: Is the American Communist party the agent of the Russian government?

The leader summarizes and provides a transition to the next point of disagreement.

JOHN: I think it is. I don't mean that its leaders are Russian spies, but I think they take their orders from Moscow.

HELEN: I disagree with that. Why do you think so?

JOHN: Because the party al-

ways comes out for whatever Russia would like to have us do—like being against the Marshall Plan.

HELEN: Probably quite a few people are against it.

JOHN: I mean they always follow the party line. Russia is against what we are doing in Greece; so the American Communist party is against it too.

HELEN: But I'm against what we are doing in Greece. Am I taking orders from Moscow?

JOHN: And Russia was against the UN holding elections in Korea; so the American Communists were against that.

TEACHER: I think, John, that Helen agrees the American Communist party follows the party line. But doesn't your argument imply also that whoever follows the party line must be taking orders from Moscow?

John and Helen are arguing at cross purposes. The leader clarifies the situation by stating the unexpressed premise of John's argument and directing discussion to that premise, the real source of the disagreement.

JOHN: Yes, it does.

TEACHER (to Helen): And isn't that the part of his argument you disagree with?

HELEN: That's it exactly. I might agree with something Russia is in favor of, but

that doesn't mean I'm taking orders. Maybe I just happen to think that way.

TEACHER (to John): Why do you feel that following the party line necessarily means the party is taking orders from Moscow?

The leader probes for supporting reasons.

JOHN: You can't prove it, I suppose. But when they *always agree with Russia*, the way the American Communists do, it looks pretty suspicious to me.

CLARA: I don't think it does. Communists all over the world tend to think alike. They all have the same Marxist ideas. You'd expect them to agree on particular issues, wouldn't you?

CARL: They'd probably think a good deal alike, but the American Communists sometimes change their position overnight exactly when Russia does. Does that sound plausible if they're not taking orders?

HELEN: You may think it isn't plausible, but does that *prove* anything?

TEACHER: I expect we'll have to agree to disagree on this point! I know of no way to

As no further progress seems possible, the leader summarizes discussion of the entire

prove that the American Communist party does, or does not, actually take orders from the Russian government.

Suppose I sum up our discussion so far. You will remember that we agreed to subdivide the issue on banning the Communist party as follows: Would banning it violate democratic principles? and Would banning it be inexpedient? On the first of these subordinate issues you agree that our principles would not allow us to ban a party merely because we don't approve of its ideas but that it would be proper to ban it if it could be shown that the party plans to seize the government by force or is the agent of a foreign government. You cannot agree whether the Communist party is the agent of the Russian government, but you do agree that the party probably would seize the government if it had a chance. Apparently, then, you would not object to banning the party on principle. But this leaves open our second subordi-

issue and proceeds to the next question in the agenda.

nate issue: Would it be expedient to ban the party? That is, would it strengthen or weaken Communist activities? Let's discuss that now.

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PART 2

THINKING STRAIGHT

CHAPTER EIGHT

BENEATH THE SURFACE OF ARGUMENT

"Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die" was spoken of soldiers in battle, not of persons seated at the conference table. It is peculiarly the business of a discussion group "to reason why," for in no other way can a conflict of opinion be resolved. As a group threshes out a conflict, the conversation typically follows this pattern:

A: *I think . . . .*
B: *Why do you think so?*
A: *Because . . . .*
B: *My objection to that reason is . . .* and so on.

This presentation and mutual criticism of reasons is the heart of the discussion method when the purpose is to resolve differences of opinion, and the skill with which the conversation is conducted largely determines whether a consensus can be reached.

It is possible to present an argument or criticize another's argument without any technical knowledge of logic. We all do it every day, and clearheaded persons do it well. Yet some knowledge of the structure of argument is useful both to the participant and to the moderator. It enables them to look beneath the surface of discussion to the unexpressed premises of the argument, to grasp the argument more quickly, and to criticize it more sharply.

When a member of a discussion group asserts that veterans make better than average grades in college and is challenged to give a reason for this assertion, he may say that veterans are more mature than the average student and would therefore be expected to do better work; he may say that he has examined the records of fifty typical veteran students and found their average grade

to be higher than that of fifty typical nonveterans; or he may say that Professor Jones, who teaches both kinds of students, testifies that the veterans receive higher grades. The three arguments illustrate respectively the appeal to principle, the appeal to fact, and the appeal to authority.

All three types of argument are legitimate; all may be sound and convincing. But in a particular instance any one of them may be weak or unsound. To know something of the structure of each type and to understand in what ways it is most likely to be weak or fallacious sharpens one's ability both to present and to criticize argument.

THE APPEAL TO PRINCIPLE

The argument from principle cited above, if expressed completely and in outline form, would run as follows:

I. Veterans in college receive higher grades than nonveteran students, for
   A. The more mature students receive the higher grades, and
   B. Veterans are more mature than nonveteran students.

Note that the argument consists of three statements: the conclusion, or point being proved, and two supporting statements, or "reasons," offered as proof. Each of the three points is expressed in a terse but complete declarative sentence; mere phrases (the higher grades of veterans, more mature students, greater maturity of veterans, for example) would not express the points clearly. In other words, one cannot argue without verbs; to state any point in argument clearly requires a complete sentence, expressed or understood.

Observe also that the first supporting point (A) is a general statement, or principle, and that the second (B) is a statement of fact which has the effect of classifying veterans under the general principle presented in the first statement. This is typical of all argument of this kind. In the following examples, chosen

at random from discussion and cast into the outline form, the more general statement appears as the first supporting point, though the order in which the two premises are presented is immaterial so far as the soundness of the argument is concerned.

I. The American Communist party should be banned, for
   A. Any organization seeking to overthrow the government by force should be banned, and
   B. The American Communist party seeks to overthrow the government by force.

I. Banning the Communist party would be un-American, for
   A. Depriving any group of the right of political association is un-American, and
   B. Banning the Communist party would deprive its members of the right of political association.

I. The Marshall Plan will discourage Communist activity in Europe, for
   A. Economic prosperity discourages Communist activity, and
   B. The Marshall Plan will promote prosperity in Europe.

While we have these examples of argument from principle before us, we may note that the soundness of such argument depends upon the acceptability of the two supporting statements. Regarding the general principle employed we may always inquire, Is this principle sound? If generally sound, is it universally so or must exceptions sometimes be made to it, and is this case such an exception? Regarding the statement of fact we may inquire, Is this statement true? As a matter of fact objection can be raised to all three of the arguments cited above. In the case of the first argument, for example, it may be doubted by some whether the banning of any organization seeking to overthrow the government is a sound principle which must invariably be acted upon. It may be doubted also whether the American Communist party actually seeks to overthrow the government by force.

In other words, some persons would demand further argument in support of the two supporting points.

When we observe the use of this type of argument in ordinary discussion, we are struck immediately by the fact that more often than not the speaker does not state both of the supporting points. He omits either the statement of principle or the statement of fact. Thus when challenged to give his reason for the assertion that the Communist party should be banned, the speaker is likely to say, "I think so because we should ban any organization that is trying to overthrow the government by force"; or he may say, "I think so because the Communist party is trying to overthrow the government by force." The missing point—the "implied premise," as the logicians call it—is of course just as much a part of the argument as the point which is stated. The two points together make up the complete argument, and if the unexpressed point is unsound, the whole argument is unsound.

It is not at all incorrect to omit one of the two supporting statements in an argument appealing to principle; often it seems unnecessary to state both. Yet when a group attempts to resolve a conflict of opinion, confusion often arises because one of the two statements has been omitted. Suppose that Mr. A has been challenged to say why he believes the Marshall Plan will lower our standard of living. He replies, "It will do so because inflation lowers the standard of living." Mr. B, who does not believe the plan will lower the standard of living, is at a loss to know how to reply because he agrees that inflation does lower the standard of living. He cannot see that his objection is to the omitted point in Mr. A's argument, that the Marshall Plan will cause inflation.

If Mr. B had understood the structure of this type of argument, he would immediately have detected the unexpressed premise of the argument and presented his objection to it. And the moderator could have performed a valuable service by stepping into the discussion at this point to supply the missing part of Mr. A's argument, thus bringing the conflict into the open. The ability to make this kind of contribution is one mark of the expert

discussion leader. (In this connection read again that portion of Chapter 7 dealing with the moderator's role as clarifier of discussion.)

The tendency to omit one of the premises in argument appealing to principle and the confusion that sometimes results are not the only facts that strike one when observing a discussion group at work. One observes also that the simple units of this type of argument are often combined in an elaborate argument which would fill several pages if written out as an editorial or magazine article; though when two members of a group are threshing out a disputed point, the complete argument is usually presented and criticized one step at a time. For example, a member challenged to support the assertion that the American Communist party should be banned may in the course of a 10-minute discussion present piecemeal an argument which could be outlined as follows, the parentheses indicating unexpressed premises:

I. The Communist party should be banned, for
  - A. (Any organization seeking to overthrow the government by force should be banned), and
  - B. The Communist party seeks to overthrow the government by force;
  - C. (Any organization acting secretly as an agency of a foreign power should be banned); and
  - D. The Communist party acts secretly as an agency of a foreign power.

In this argument two coordinate units of reasoning, each composed of a general principle and a statement of fact, are used to support the same conclusion; though since the speaker left the two statements of principle (A and C) unexpressed, he probably would say that he had given two reasons only for banning the Communist party.

Several units of argument may also be combined in another

way: One unit may be used to support a supporting statement of another unit, as is done twice in the following example:

I. The Communist party should be banned, for
  A. Any organization seeking to overthrow the government by force should be banned, and
  B. The Communist party seeks to overthrow the government by force, for
    1. Any party committed to a philosophy of revolution will seek to overthrow the government by force, and
    2. The Communist party is committed to a philosophy of revolution, for
      a) The philosophy of Marx as interpreted by Lenin is a philosophy of revolution, and
      b) The American Communist party is committed to the Marx-Lenin philosophy.

In actual discussion this argument probably would be presented one unit at a time. Let us suppose Jones has asserted that the Communist party should be banned. When asked by Smith for his reason, he replies with points (A) and (B). Smith accepts (A) but challenges the truth of (B), and Jones supports (B) with points (1) and (2). Again Smith accepts the first point and challenges the second, and Jones presents a) and b) in support of (2). This process may continue for some time as Smith digs deeper and deeper toward the roots of Jones's thinking. Eventually Jones will arrive at premises which Smith must accept, or Jones will confess his inability to carry the argument further. In the former case, agreement has been reached; in the latter also agreement has been reached if Jones now abandons his conclusion. He may of course abandon this particular line of argument and attempt to support his conclusion in some other way. In either case both men have done some real thinking, and their difference of opinion has been clarified.

It is also possible that when one of Jones's premises has been

challenged, he will continue to insist on its truth though unable to produce any argument to support it. This will occur most often when the premise is a disputed statement of fact. Unless the statement can be verified, no further progress is possible, and discussion of the point should be postponed pending further investigation. When verification is impossible, the discussion may still have been worth while, for the area of disagreement separating the two men has been much reduced.

The following fragment of discussion may serve to illustrate some of the observations on argument from principle made in the preceding pages.

MODERATOR: Our difference of opinion here is over whether some form of national health insurance would be desirable. How do you feel about it, Steiner?

STEINER: I am definitely of the opinion that it would be undesirable.

MACK: Would you mind telling us why you think so?

STEINER: Not at all. I have two reasons for objecting to any such proposal. The first has to do with the relationship between the physician and the patient. It seems to me highly desirable that the patient be free to choose his own physician.

MACK: I quite agree. But why do you assume that he couldn't choose his own physician under national health insurance?

STEINER: Well, could he?

MACK: He certainly could under the plan proposed in the Wagner-Murray-Dingell bill. The patient is free to go to any physician in his community who is associated with the system.

STEINER: In that case I wouldn't object, or at any rate I wouldn't raise this particular objection. I would still object to government health insurance on other grounds.

MACK: What other grounds?

STEINER: On the ground that such a plan would be ineffective;

that is, that it would not actually make medical services available to many people.

MACK: Why not?

STEINER: Because you'd have to have the cooperation of the medical profession. I'm assuming here that under the plan you have in mind the physician would not be compelled to enter the system.

MACK: That's right, and it does mean that to be effective the system would need the support and cooperation of a large proportion of the medical men of the country.

STEINER: Well, I just do not believe that any considerable number would be willing to serve under the system.

MACK: I'm more optimistic than you are on that score.

STEINER: You very well know that the American Medical Association is opposed to any such plan. It has taken an official stand against government health insurance plans.

MACK: I understand it has, but that doesn't convince me that doctors would refuse to join the system.

STEINER: The association, through its official spokesmen, has repeatedly put itself on record as opposed to it.

MODERATOR (to Steiner) : I gather that Mack does not question the fact that the American Medical Association disapproves of government health insurance. But your argument also assumes, does it not, that the great majority of medical men will follow the lead of the AMA in this matter?

STEINER: Yes.

MODERATOR (to Mack): And isn't that where you part company with Steiner?

MACK: Yes, I am not at all convinced that the AMA expresses the views of the medical profession as a whole on this question, nor do I think the average physician will be deterred from joining the plan just because the AMA opposes it. (To Steiner) Have you any evidence that the AMA can speak for the entire medical profession on this question?

STEINER: No, no actual evidence, but personally I have no doubt that it does.

MODERATOR: I doubt if further discussion on this point would serve any purpose unless one of you can produce evidence on it.

The entire argument presented by Steiner in the course of this conversation might be outlined as follows:

I. Adoption of a plan of national health insurance would be undesirable, for
  A. The patient should be free to choose his own physician, and
  B. Under national health insurance the patient would be assigned arbitrarily to a physician;
  C. Any ineffective plan is undesirable, and
  D. National health insurance would be ineffective, for
    1. It cannot be effective without the cooperation of most of the physicians, and
    2. Most physicians would refuse to join it, for
      a) They will not join a system opposed by the American Medical Association, and
      b) The American Medical Association opposes national health insurance.

A comparison of the outlined argument and the actual discussion makes it clear that in his original presentation of the argument Steiner omitted premises (IB), (IC), and (ID2a). Only the last omission caused difficulty requiring the intervention of the moderator. The net result of the entire discussion was to reduce the original head-on disagreement over the desirability of national health insurance to a disagreement over the single question whether the medical profession generally would follow the American Medical Association in its opposition to the plan.

Considerable space has been given here to the discussion of

argument from principle because probably four fifths of all argument presented in discussion is of this type. But the appeal to fact and the appeal to authority must also be considered.

THE APPEAL TO FACT

In supporting an assertion challenged in discussion one may appeal to fact through the use of *generalization* or *analogy*.

Generalization.—This form of argument attempts to establish the truth of a general statement by citing specific instances in support of it, as when one tries to prove that veterans receive high grades in college by citing the example of a number of veterans who have received such grades. Most of us are probably too easily impressed by argument of this sort. Certainly we should attach very little weight to a generalization based on a handful of instances, as in the argument that the closed shop restricts output because it is known to have done so in a dozen cases. It probably would be easy to find a dozen cases in which the closed shop has not restricted output.

Usually the number of instances required for a sound generalization runs into the hundreds or thousands, and the argument becomes essentially statistical in character. The Gallup Public Opinion Poll is a familiar example of generalization of this kind. The result of the poll is a general statement regarding what the majority of voters will do on election day based on a study of how some thousands of them have said they would vote. The compilation and interpretation of such statistical data is highly technical work requiring professional training and is subject to error even when done by experts.

In evaluating argument of this kind the laymen will do well to raise the following questions:

1. Was the study on which the generalization was based conducted by persons qualified for it by training and experience?
2. Was the study based on a sufficient number of instances?
3. What assurance is there that the instances chosen were typical?

4. In drawing conclusions were the data correctly interpreted?

No one of these questions admits of an easy answer. How many instances, for example, are necessary for a sound generalization? Much depends on the nature of the question being investigated. In the exact sciences a few instances, or even a single instance, might be sufficient. When a physicist conducts an experiment to determine at what temperature chemically pure water will boil under a given atmospheric pressure, he can control all of the factors likely to affect the result. Theoretically one carefully conducted experiment might warrant a conclusion. The situation in the social sciences is very different. There the factors which may affect the result of an investigation are so many and so difficult to identify and isolate that a large number of instances must be examined.

How many instances the social scientist must examine to warrant a conclusion depends in part on what assurance he has that the instances chosen are typical of the class from which they are drawn. And this in turn depends upon his method of selecting the instances. He may select them at random; for example, in conducting a questionnaire study of popular reaction to a radio program the investigator may select every tenth name appearing in the telephone directory. He assumes that under this method the atypical instances will cancel each other and not materially affect the result. But can he be sure that telephone users as a class are typical of those who listen to the radio? Perhaps not. He may then decide to follow a method of weighted sampling, as is done in conducting a public opinion poll. This involves identifying the factors which may affect the result, such as income level and geographical location. The investigator then determines what proportion of the total population falls within each group and draws a corresponding proportion of his instances from each of those groups.

Even when an investigation has been competently conducted, it is possible to misinterpret the results, as when confident predictions regarding the presidential election of 1948 were based

on public opinion polls. The Gallup poll indicated that when the investigation was concluded a few weeks before the election, a majority of the voters intended to support Governor Dewey. Apparently many changed their minds during the closing days of the campaign.

Analogy.—This form of argument also appeals to fact but is based on the similarity between two institutions or situations. One might argue, for example, that a world federal government would preserve peace among nations because the government of the United States has, with one exception, preserved peace among the states. The soundness of the argument depends upon the closeness of the analogy. Is the problem of preserving peace among the nations essentially like that of preserving peace among our own states? Clearly the two situations have a good deal in common, but are they alike in regard to those conditions that affect the preservation of peace? This is not an easy question to answer. To evaluate the argument it would be necessary to determine what factors influence the preservation of peace and then to consider whether the two situations are similar in those respects. While analogical argument sometimes has weight, most of us are probably too easily impressed by it.

THE APPEAL TO AUTHORITY

Sometimes in discussion one supports an assertion simply by quoting the opinion of a person recognized as an authority on the subject, as when one argues that there is no defense against the atomic bomb by quoting Professor Compton to that effect. Professor Compton is not presented as a witness testifying to a fact which any physicist would be competent to observe and report, such as the fact that Uranium 235 is radioactive. He is quoted rather as an authority whose opinion on atomic warfare is entitled to respect.

Of a witness testifying to an ordinary fact we ask only that he have had an opportunity to observe the fact and that he be a person of veracity. When any person with a reputation for

veracity testifies that he was on the scene when the accident occurred and that the car which struck the pedestrian drove on without stopping, we attach a good deal of weight to his testimony. But of a person quoted as an authority we rightfully expect much more. We wish to be assured not only that he has an adequate knowledge of the facts, but also that he is qualified to interpret them.

If John Doe is quoted as saying that the living conditions of the average Russian citizen have improved greatly during the past ten years, we wish to know a good deal about John Doe before accepting his testimony. To begin with, has he an adequate knowledge of the facts? How often has he been in Russia during the past ten years? How long did he stay? What parts of the country did he visit? Was he free to go where he pleased? Does he speak Russian? Has he the training in social science necessary to observe facts of this kind? And assuming that he is thoroughly acquainted with the facts, we wish to know also how sound his judgment is in interpreting the facts. Is he free from prejudice either for or against the Russian government? Has he a financial or other personal interest that might warp his judgment? Has he the scientific training necessary to interpret economic and sociological data?

The questions one will wish to raise in evaluating the testimony of an authority may be summarized as follows:

1. Has the authority an adequate knowledge of the facts?
   a) Has he had an opportunity to observe the facts?
   b) Is he qualified by training and experience to observe facts in this particular field?
2. Is his judgment sound?
   a) Is he free from prejudice?
   b) Has he had scientific training in this particular field?

Probably no one would prefer to accept the testimony of an authority as conclusive when it is possible to examine the evi-

dence itself. But often the layman must form an opinion on matters too difficult or technical for anyone but an expert to understand. Of necessity we rely constantly on the advice of the lawyer, the engineer, the physician, the scientist. But we need not take it for granted that anyone whose opinion is being quoted actually is an authority. And where possible, we wish to know whether other authorities in the field agree with the one quoted.

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CHAPTER NINE

PITFALLS IN THINKING

It was an optimistic philosopher who defined man as "the rational animal." We have, it is true, a preference for sound reasoning over unsound in situations where no influence is warping our judgment. Confronted by a choice between the argument that someone must have broken into the house because the lock has been forced, and the argument that probably no one has broken in because gremlins are always forcing locks, we unhesitatingly accept the former and reject the latter. But we can hardly pride ourselves on this triumph of reason. In most situations the delicate magnetic needle of reason is easily diverted from its true direction by influences having nothing to do with logic.

The preceding chapter on the role of logic in thinking suggested how we *ought* to think if we wish to reach sound conclusions. But while an elementary knowledge of logic is useful, it does not ensure straight thinking. We are emotional as well as rational in nature, and emotional factors so often influence judgment that to reason well we must know something of psychology as well as of logic.

All of us possess, in a greater or less degree, certain traits of character that make us gullible when listening to argument: we are suggestible, emotional, selfish, timid, and indolent. These traits are always likely to betray us into irrational thinking unless we are on our guard against them. And when we are expressing our own views in discussion, they tempt us into behavior that confuses the argument and makes clear thinking difficult for other members of the group.

WHY WE ARE GULLIBLE

Suggestibility.—We have a tendency to believe almost anything we are told, especially if we are told it often enough by persons

we like or admire. We properly attach a good deal of weight to the judgment of a recognized authority on a subject, but often we do not stop to inquire into the qualifications of the person who is speaking or is being quoted. Some people are impressed by almost anything said by an eminent person. Because George Washington warned us against "entangling alliances," some Americans oppose the North Atlantic Pact. Because an industrial leader has built up a million-dollar business, he becomes for some an authority on all subjects from modern art to international relations.

A familiar variation of the "famous person" fallacy in thinking is the assumption that whatever one sees in print must be true. No touchstone of truth is more fallible than "I saw it in the paper." It is true that we depend on the printed page for most of our information, but only the critical reader separates the wheat from the chaff—and there is a bushel of chaff for each grain of wheat. Probably no view is so ill-informed or absurd that it has not at some time found its way into print.

While we are too easily impressed by what eminent persons say, we are also susceptible to suggestion from persons like ourselves if they succeed in catching our attention. The ability to wear red suspenders, chew tobacco, and talk in a folksy drawl seems a slight qualification for public office, but apparently it impresses many voters. On a somewhat higher level most of us are favorably impressed by a public leader who looks and acts like one of ourselves. "Good old George," we feel, can hardly be mistaken. This may be called the "just folks" fallacy.

We are especially impressed by what ordinary people say if many of them say it. If "they say" that the world is flat, as "they" once did, no further evidence is required. On practical matters within the range of his own observation and experience the average man often thinks shrewdly and independently; his opinion on such matters, if shared by many, is entitled to respect. But on other subjects the mass of men have often been unanimously and tragically wrong. The assumption that what "they

say" must be true we may label the "band wagon" fallacy.

Closely allied to the "band wagon" fallacy is the "forefather" fallacy: the assumption that whatever our forefathers believed must be true. By a strange quirk of the mind we regard earlier generations as older and wiser than our own. Actually they were younger. We have their experience and our own as well to instruct us, and "because Grandfather thought so" is seldom a valid reason for thinking so now.

Especially potent is suggestion from the closely knit social and special-interest groups to which we belong—our church, lodge, club, or political party. When such groups have an official "party line," most of the members accept it without question. And even when the group takes no official stand on controversial questions, its members usually share the same opinions and prejudices. To challenge, or even to question them would make us uncomfortable, and a reasonable degree of conformity is accepted by most people as the price of membership. Seldom do we join such a group because we approve of what it stands for; usually we are born into the group or join it for social reasons and then accept uncritically the opinions and attitudes of its members.

Our susceptibility to suggestion from eminent persons, from the printed page, from persons like ourselves, from the majority, from tradition, and from the groups to which we belong explains a good deal of our gullibility.

Emotionalism.—Any emotional state warps judgment. When a person says, "I am so angry I can't see straight," he really means, "I am so angry I can't think straight." And he is right. No one can think clearly while angry—or while jealous or afraid or carried away with enthusiasm. The emotional state blinds us to all argument not in harmony with it.

As we cannot change our nature in this respect, our only hope of thinking rationally lies in avoiding emotion when we have thinking to do. This we can accomplish to some extent by being on guard against those influences that throw us into emotional states.

Among the influences we must guard against, one, of course, is the obvious emotional appeal, as when a speaker or writer prefaces his argument on our policy toward Russia with a dramatic account of alleged brutalities committed by Russian soldiers against defenseless peasants. Even if true, the story has little bearing on the problem of foreign policy; its only purpose is to make it difficult for us to approach the problem objectively. There are times, to be sure, when we should gladly surrender to an emotional appeal. Our minds are made up, the time for action has arrived; and the speaker or writer who can fire us with enthusiasm to do what we already know ought to be done performs a useful service. But when we have a problem to solve, our habitual reaction to the emotional appeal should be to identify it for what it is and to ignore it as completely as possible.

More insidious than the frank emotional appeal, because more subtle, is the use by a speaker or writer of words, phrases, and other symbols that touch off strong emotional reactions. Such terms as "radical," "liberal," "conservative," "socialism," "communism," "Americanism," "free enterprise," "bureaucracy"; such symbols as the flag, the national anthem, the hammer and sickle —all are capable of provoking an emotional response in most people. And all are used deliberately for that purpose by the propagandist. The critical reader or listener detects the use of such emotionally loaded words at once, and recognizing them for what they are, is largely immune from their influence.

In discussion we are likely also to respond emotionally to any remark that contradicts what we have said, that questions our motives, or that seems in any other way to attack us personally. Our resentment against the speaker then blinds us to the merit we might otherwise see in his argument. To think clearly in discussion we must cultivate the habit of studiously ignoring the emotional implications of the other fellow's provocative language.

If we are to be cool and objective in our thinking, then, we

must be on our guard against reacting to emotional appeals, emotionally loaded words, and provocative statements.

Selfishness.—Our capacity for believing whatever serves our own interest is remarkable. In other people the defect is obvious. When a prosperous physician opposes public medicine, a wealthy manufacturer favors protective tariff, a laborer advocates social security, or a dairy farmer defends taxing oleomargarine, we say, "Naturally—he is prejudiced." But we all have the same blind spot.

And we are all under the same illusion of objectivity. The physician opposes public medicine on the ground that it would hamper medical research; the dairy farmer favors taxing oleomargarine because the tax would discourage the growing of soybeans and thus conserve the soil. Seldom is any intentional dishonesty involved. We accept the conclusion that favors our interest and then discover or invent "reasons" to support it. This process of inventing reasons to support a conclusion already accepted without evidence is sometimes called *rationalization.* Where our interest is involved we can guard against the tendency to rationalize by asking ourselves the question: If my interest were not involved, would I consider this a sound argument?

Timidity.—No one defends timidity as a trait of character, but few appreciate how much it influences thinking. It warps our judgment in at least three ways.

We all fear the unknown and therefore dread change, often quite unreasonably. Any proposal involving a sharp break with familiar ways of thinking or acting is suspect, and we immediately warn the innovator against "jumping from the frying pan into the fire." The warning is in order only after we have carefully considered the probable consequences, good and bad, of the proposed change. To shun the new simply because it is new is not prudence, but timidity.

For much the same reason we fear "extreme" measures and prefer keeping to the middle of the road. That following the middle of the road is always the safest course is an illusion. It

implies that of two divergent courses of action both contain good and evil, which is not always true, and that a middle course will combine the good and avoid the evil of both, which also is not always true. It is doubtful, for example, whether any middle course is possible between authoritarianism and democracy. This does not imply that extreme measures are preferable to moderation; it does imply that before choosing a middle course we should examine the evidence. Sometimes it is only timidity that keeps us in the middle of the road.

And we dread doubt and suspense. For this reason we find fence sitting painful and often fly prematurely to one conclusion or another just to get the matter settled. This may settle our minds, but it does not settle the problem. When the evidence does not justify a conclusion, no conclusion should be drawn; rather we should withhold judgment until more evidence is found.

While we cannot altogether overcome our timidity, we can think more rationally by guarding against the "conservative" fallacy, the "middle of the road" fallacy, and the fallacy of "jumping to conclusions."

Indolence.—Thinking is hard work. Most of us avoid it when we can; and when we must think, we take any short cut that promises a conclusion without serious effort. Unfortunately some of the short cuts involve very bad thinking.

We are too lazy, for example, to search until we find the word or phrase that exactly fits the idea we wish to express. We speak vaguely of "government in business" when we mean "government regulation of public utility rates." For "ratification of the treaty by the Senate" we are content to say, "passage of the treaty by Congress." To think in this bumbling fashion is like trying to thread a needle while wearing boxing gloves. In a given context no two words convey exactly the same meaning, and loose, vague phraseology does not "amount to the same thing" as more precise expression of the idea.

The use of the right word is not only essential to the successful

communication of ideas to others, it is essential to the clarity of thought itself. Until we have put an idea into precise language, we do not clearly understand the idea; we have in mind only a rough approximation of it. It is impossible, therefore, to divorce precision of expression from clarity of thought. In thinking it is the beginning of wisdom to use the right word and to know what we mean by it, and this requires more effort than we are sometimes willing to make.

Indolence is responsible also for a tendency to oversimplification in thinking. It requires a painful effort to keep in mind and to take account of the complexities that make up the Chinese situation. Unwilling to make the effort, we indulge in a kind of "headline" thinking which ignores the bothersome details: the Nationalist regime, we say, is corrupt, the Chinese Communist party is run by Russia, the Chinese peasants are incapable of self-government. In real life no situation is that simple, and to think in headlines is to miss most of the truth.

Another form of oversimplification is the tendency to regard a complex situation or proposal as either entirely good or entirely bad. It is probable that a system of public medicine would have both desirable and undesirable features. After a careful examination of both one might conclude that the desirable features outweigh the undesirable (or vice versa), but to assume at any stage of one's thinking that such a measure is either entirely good or entirely bad prevents any real consideration of the problem. The "black or white" short cut never leads to a sound conclusion.

Still another form of oversimplification consists in personifying abstractions. In thinking of Russia it is difficult to keep in mind the many peoples, official personalities, cultural traditions, economic practices, and political forms that make up the Soviet Union. We find it easier to ignore these complexities and think of Russia as a stocky man with a mustache and a pipe. When Stalin speaks, Russia is speaking; what Stalin thinks, Russia thinks. Though vaguely aware that this assumption is nonsense, we constantly allow it to influence our thinking.

Vagueness and oversimplification are not the only errors into which indolence betrays us. Reference has already been made to the fact that we often reject a new idea because we fear change. Conversely, we are inclined to accept without examination any new idea that fits neatly into our familiar pattern of thinking and acting. To a person reared in the American democratic tradition and accustomed to the American form of government the suggestion that the people of Indonesia should adopt a similar political system seems plausible enough. "Why not?" we ask, and accept the idea forthwith. To inquire into the political needs, capacities, and resources of the Indonesian people and to consider what form of government would best serve their interests would require an effort we are unwilling to make.

Finally, because of indolence we often abandon entirely the attempt to solve a problem that proves difficult. After examining some of the evidence and finding it contradictory or inconclusive, we shrug our shoulders and say, "Well, you can't tell what to think, can you?" And we dismiss the problem from our minds. This fault is as serious as the opposite one, noted above, of jumping prematurely to a conclusion. When we drop an unsolved problem, we can seldom claim to be withholding judgment while we seek further evidence; usually we make no attempt to find more evidence and simply lapse into indifference. We often need the courage to withhold judgment, but we need also the *will to find out.*

It is discouraging to realize how often our suggestibility, emotionalism, selfishness, timidity, and indolence warp our thinking. And it is disturbing to know that the propagandist deliberately plays upon these weaknesses to serve his own ends. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed. We can avoid many of these pitfalls by being on guard against them.

HOW WE OBSTRUCT GROUP THINKING

We have noted that certain traits in human character make us an easy prey to specious argument and that the propagandist

sometimes plays upon these weaknesses to influence our thinking. It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that appeals which warp our thinking are always made with deliberate intent to mislead. Some of the very traits that make us gullible also betray us into discussion behavior that makes it difficult for others in the group to think straight. And against this tendency also we should be on our guard. At the risk of repeating some of the suggestions already made in Chapter 6, we will notice here the ways in which we unintentionally obstruct the thinking of others.

There are four easy ways to be a nuisance in discussion: failing to listen to or to understand what others are saying, being careless in the use of language, lacking candor in appraising argument, and lacking objectivity.

Failure to listen.—In discussion we are sometimes too impatient to speak or too preoccupied with our own thoughts to listen carefully to what is being said. Only half understanding the point that has been made, we attempt to reply immediately—and our irrelevant remark throws the discussion off the track. But our failure to understand is not always due to inattention; sometimes it is due to a hostility toward the speaker that leads us unintentionally to distort what he has said. The following passage is typical of what often happens in discussion.

> JONES: I don't think it is fair to require a public schoolteacher to swear that he is not a Communist. We don't require—
>
> SMITH: So it's unfair to keep Communists out of the schools! You would let them convert our children to Communism! Well, there we disagree.
>
> JONES: That isn't what I said. . . .

Jones is quite right—that is *not* what he said. Smith's hostility has betrayed him, perhaps unconsciously, into distorting Jones's statement and setting up in place of what Jones really meant a "straw man" that can be attacked more easily. The result may be to throw the entire group into confusion for 5 or 10 minutes.

Careless use of language.—We have already noted that the use of vague, poorly defined words and phrases confuses our own thinking. It also confuses the thinking of those who listen to us. If a speaker says "play Santa Claus to the world" when he means "appropriate funds for the European Recovery Program," no one will understand what he means, and the ensuing discussion will probably lapse into confusion.

Careless use of language is illustrated also by the tendency to reckless overstatement. A speaker means to say, "Some forms of national advertising are probably not conducive to the public welfare." Excited or annoyed, he actually says, "Advertising is a public menace." Exaggeration provoking exaggeration, the next speaker retorts, "On the contrary, modern industrial civilization is based on advertising."

The business of a discussion group can be transacted only in the currency of a common language understood by all, and those who carelessly or recklessly debase the currency are enemies of group thinking. If they are to think together, the members of a discussion group must know what they mean and say what they mean.

Lack of candor.—Ideally all members of a discussion group understand that the discussion is off the record, that no one loses face when he changes his mind, that in fact willingness to change one's mind is a virtue. This perfect candor is seldom achieved. When the position a member has taken proves untenable or an argument he has advanced is shown to be weak, instead of admitting his error and modifying his thinking, he is likely to feel that honor does not permit him to acknowledge the error. Unable to meet the argument against him, he tries to evade it by changing the subject, by obscuring the issue in a cloud of words, or by surreptitiously shifting his ground. This delays and confuses the thinking of the entire group.

Lack of objectivity.—Much has already been said about the ways in which lack of objectivity vitiates our own thinking. It also leads us into discussion behavior that obstructs the thinking

of others. In the excitement of discussion, for example, we may use loaded words that set off emotional reactions in others and thus bias their thinking. If we are opposed to public medicine, we refer to it, with prejudicial emphasis, as "socialized" medicine. The appointment to the Supreme Court of a jurist of whose political philosophy we disapprove we refer to as "packing" the Court. One contribution each member of a group can make to clear thinking by his colleagues is to avoid the use of emotionally loaded words and phrases.

Another contribution each member can make to clear thinking by the group is to control his own temper. An ill-tempered outburst by one member provokes a similar reaction in others, and soon no one can think rationally. If another member loses his temper or is in some other way offensive, it is a good rule not to reply immediately but to consider why he feels so strongly. This cools one's own temper. And when tempted to explode, it is also wholesome to remember that losing one's temper is usually a confession that one has no real argument to present. We don't usually explode except when we feel strongly and are aware that we can make no convincing defense of our position.

Finally, we should avoid obstructing the thinking of our colleagues by criticizing their motives rather than their arguments. Confronted with the argument that the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes Waterway would be exorbitantly expensive, we say, "So you are from New York City? I understand why you New Yorkers don't like this proposal—it would take business away from New York Harbor." This remark has no bearing whatever on the probable cost of the waterway, and its only effect is to annoy the other person and divert attention from the point under discussion.

We should be on our guard, then, not only against influences that bias our own thinking, but also against the tendency to express ourselves in such a way as to bias the thinking of others. Our tendency to stumble into the pitfalls discussed in this chapter arises from our psychological make-up rather than from our

ignorance of logic. We cannot change our nature, but by knowing what warps thinking we can often avoid it.

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PART 3

PUTTING DISCUSSION TO WORK

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

CHAPTER TEN

THE COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE

No community should be without one or more groups meeting regularly for the informal discussion of public questions. Whether they confine their attention to local problems or discuss national and international questions as well, such groups are an essential part of the democratic process at the community level. Every citizen should belong to one; if he can find none in his neighborhood, he should try to organize one.

ORGANIZING A DISCUSSION GROUP

Is there an organization in the community that would be interested in devoting meetings regularly or occasionally to the discussion of public questions? If so, it is usually better to work through such an organization than to start a new one. Members of the existing organization are accustomed to meeting regularly; they have a feeling of loyalty to the group; they are already acquainted with one another. These are important factors in the success of a discussion program. It takes time and labor to build up a new organization, and the mortality rate of such groups is high.

But if no organization in the community is interested in discussion, one should not hesitate to start a new one. Usually it is best to start in a small way and very informally. A good method is to invite a half dozen interested friends to one's home for an evening to discuss some public question in which they are interested. If the meeting is successful, another should be held a month later with a few additional guests. Most discussion groups have grown out of such informal semisocial gatherings. The number of members need not be large; six or eight are enough, and for good discussion the group should never exceed twenty. Formal organization and a public meeting place are seldom necessary.

In organizing a group the following suggestions may prove useful. Prepare carefully for the first meeting. Make clear to those attending that they are not coming to hear a speech but to do their own talking. Select for discussion a problem in which the members are interested, one on which they have opinions, and one on which there will be some difference of opinion among them. And choose as leader someone whom the group likes and respects and who will be willing to prepare for the meeting. If the venture succeeds, provision should be made soon to train those who are to serve as leaders. In this connection the suggestion on leadership training in Appendix D may prove useful.

PREPARING FOR DISCUSSION

Preliminaries.—The topic for discussion should be selected well in advance of the meeting, consideration being given to the suggestions in Chapter 2 on the conditions necessary for good discussion. Early arrangements should also be made for a meeting place where all who are likely to attend can be seated comfortably.

Announcement of the question to be discussed may be made at a previous meeting of the group, but usually telephone calls or a postal card or form letter will result in better attendance. If possible, the announcement should state the question to be discussed and the agenda to be followed, should indicate the time and place of the meeting, and should mention the name of the discussion leader. The tone of the announcement should be informal, as in the following example:

How should we handle the housing problem?

1. Can private industry solve the problem?
2. Would voluntary cooperative housing projects help?
3. Should the government assist by
    a) Extending credit to private builders?
    b) Building government housing units?

Let's talk it over next Wednesday, February 11, 8 P.M. at the home of William Beck, 19 Wetmore Road. Mr. Carl Smith will lead the discussion.

If a more extended announcement is to be made through a form letter, it might include such additional material as a provocative statement of fact, a challenging quotation, perhaps a short list of some of the arguments on either side of the question. It might also list several magazine articles on the subject. Anything that arouses interest in advance helps to ensure a lively discussion.

Information.—Chapter 2 suggests several methods of making available to a group the information it must have to discuss any question intelligently. While one should not overlook any method of providing information, the leader of a community round table will often find that he must himself be the group's principal source of information. If so, he must study the question in preparation for leading the discussion. In Appendix A of this volume he will find bibliographies on a number of controversial questions suitable for discussion. If he must prepare his own bibliography, he may find the suggestions in Chapter 3 useful.

The agenda.—When the leader has obtained a sufficient knowledge of the question, he should prepare an agenda. In Chapter 4 it was suggested that the group itself should work out the agenda, and in many situations this is sound practice. But it takes a good deal of time; a group devoting several sessions to discussion of a problem will probably need most of the first session to arrive at a satisfactory agenda. A citizens' round table can usually devote one session only to discussion of each problem; if it must work out its own agenda, little time will be left for discussion of the issues. It is wise, therefore, for the discussion leader to prepare an agenda. If possible, it should be written on a blackboard, where members of the group can glance at it during the discussion.

The agenda should not be imposed on the group against its will, however. Unless the members are satisfied that it represents a sound analysis of the problem, they will have little confidence in the conclusions reached. In presenting the agenda, the leader should inquire whether any member has in mind an argument relevant to discussion of the question which cannot be brought up under one or another of the issues proposed. If so, the agenda should be revised until all are satisfied with it. Usually if the leader has worked out an agenda carefully, the group will be glad to accept it.

The introductory talk.—If the group is meeting to continue discussion of a problem to which several sessions are being devoted, the leader should open the session with a brief statement of the result of discussion at previous sessions and indicate what issues are to be considered at the present meeting. Most community round tables devote one session only to consideration of a question, and the leader's task in opening the meeting is to introduce the question and present such material as will pave the way for profitable discussion. This is best done by means of a 10- or 15-minute talk.

The talk may begin with a few remarks designed to arouse interest in the problem and sharpen realization of its importance. An arresting quotation or a reference to a recent event will sometimes serve. The question to be discussed is then stated. This may involve defining terms; for example, if the question is whether Congress should adopt a system of public medicine, it would be well to define "public medicine." Much confusion and waste of time will be avoided if all understand from the beginning precisely what is to be discussed.

If the question is one of those characterized in Chapter 2 as a problem of personal conduct, it can often be put before the group most effectively in dramatic form. The leader prepares in brief story form a real or fictitious case presenting the problem to be discussed. Such a dramatic presentation of the problem should usually be made immediately after the leader has stated the question.

In introducing the discussion of most public problems, the leader will not find the case method useful and will proceed from statement of the question to a statement of whatever background of fact may be necessary for intelligent discussion. It may be useful to state briefly the facts out of which the problem has arisen or to review previous attempts to solve it. No one set of topics can be followed invariably. The leader should present whatever material will best set the stage for profitable discussion. Most groups value a good expository statement; it provides a sound foundation for discussion and gives them something to carry away with them. And even the well-informed are usually glad to have the principal facts reviewed briefly.

The exposition of facts should seldom consume more than 10 minutes. If 20 or 30 minutes are required, the topic probably is not suitable for discussion by this particular group. Few persons can assimilate a large body of new information at one sitting well enough to make any practical use of it in discussion.

And the factual statement should be strictly impartial. To slant it toward any particular solution of the problem destroys its value as a basis for discussion and weakens confidence in the leader's integrity.

After the leader has presented his expository statement, he should close his introductory talk by presenting the agenda for approval by the group.

The topics, then, which the leader will often wish to cover in introducing a public question for discussion are these:

1. Opening remarks to arouse interest in the problem
2. Statement of the question
3. Statement of the facts
4. Presentation of the agenda

While the leader will deliver the introductory talk with little or no interruption by the group, he should not think of it as a formal speech. He should remain seated while talking and speak as informally as he will do while moderating the discussion to follow. In no circumstances should the talk be written out and read. The leader should outline it carefully on one or two sheets

of paper and speak from notes. The inexperienced speaker will find that talking the material through aloud several times will help to fix the sequence of ideas in mind and develop fluency in their expression. In any case he should be so familiar with the outline that he need do no more than glance at it occasionally as he presents the talk.

CONDUCTING THE SESSION

Little need be added here to what has already been said in Chapter 7 on moderating discussion. The leader will invite discussion in turn on each of the issues in the agenda, pointing up the discussion as it proceeds and summing it up at the end of the session. He may find that discussion is livelier if in proposing each issue for consideration he suggests some of the arguments on either side. This "primes the pump" and discussion gets under way more rapidly.

At the close of the session the leader should usually invite the group to consider what action it wishes to take as a result of the discussion. In some cases it may take collective action; in others individual members may wish to act by expressing their views at the polls, by writing to their congressman, or by circulating a petition. Whether agreement has been reached or not, the members should be encouraged to give appropriate expression in action to whatever views they hold. And the leader should be prepared to assist them. He should be prepared, for example, to tell them who their congressmen are and how to address letters to them. The interest and conviction generated by a good discussion should not be allowed to evaporate without finding effective expression.

In conducting a community round table two problems not considered in Chapter 7 may arise. One concerns the use of time. While discussion usually should not run for more than 1½ hours, no public question can be discussed adequately in that length of time. If the entire agenda is to be covered, the leader must terminate discussion of some of the issues before agreement has been

reached. Would it be preferable to give to each issue the time necessary to reach agreement, even if some issues are not touched? The leader may wish to put this question to the group before discussion starts. If it is left to his own judgment, he will usually find that the group is better satisfied when it covers the entire agenda, even though some issues are discussed inadequately.

Another problem arises when the group is affiliated with a national organization which takes an official stand on the question discussed. The League of Women Voters of the United States, for example, has committed itself on some questions which its local leagues may still wish to discuss. How can the leader of such a group be strictly impartial in presenting the introductory talk and moderating discussion and still do justice to the stand taken by the national organization?

A partial solution perhaps would be to confine discussion to questions on which the national organization has not taken a stand. The organization may be committed to support of the United Nations, but within the limits of that commitment innumerable controversial questions arise which are suitable for discussion. Some national organizations wisely invite their local groups to study and discuss a problem before an official position is taken.

But suppose that the group does discuss a question on which its national organization has announced an official stand. The leader wishes to do justice to his work as moderator and yet to state and defend the position of the organization. Probably the best solution is for him to remain strictly impartial until the group has concluded its discussion and then to state and defend the view of the organization, perhaps relating it to the conclusions, sound or unsound (in the leader's view), at which the group has arrived.

But even when this is done, may not the members carry away with them the "wrong" conclusion? They certainly may. This is one of the hazards of democracy for those convinced that they already know the right answers; when we invite people to think,

we run the risk of their reaching conclusions we do not like. But this should not disturb us. If a cause is sound it cannot help profiting in the long run from the freest possible discussion. To believe otherwise is to lack faith in democracy.

THE USE OF FILMS

Earlier in the chapter it was suggested that a problem can sometimes be presented effectively in story form. From the story to the motion picture is a natural step; and when the right film can be found, there is no more effective way to present a problem for discussion. The films employed for the purpose are usually 16-mm. black-and-white sound films running from 10 to 20 minutes. Many of them can be rented at public libraries, and often a projector and screen can be borrowed from the local high school or from a church in the community.

The leader's chief difficulty is in learning what films are suitable for this purpose. Probably his best source of information is the *Film Forum Review*. During the two years of its life, beginning in the spring of 1946 and running through the winter of 1948–1949, this quarterly published a synopsis and evaluation of films suitable for use in discussion, winnowing those reviewed from a total of over eight hundred. For each film recommended the *Review* gave the title of the film, the name of its producer, the name of the firm distributing it, and its running time. This information was followed by a half-page summary of the contents of the film and a paragraph of critical comment. When the *Film Forum Review* ceased publication in the winter of 1948–1949, its function was assumed by the *Adult Education Journal*. When a suitable film is not available, the leader should consider the possibility of using a film strip presenting a series of still pictures on the problem to be discussed. The *United Nations Bulletin*, published twice monthly by the Department of Public Information, The United Nations, Lake Success, New York, frequently lists and describes film strips dealing with the organization and work of the United Nations and its related agencies.

And the *New York Times* now publishes once each month a film strip dealing with a public problem that has figured prominently in the news during the month.

When a film or film strip is to be used, the leader should arrange in advance to have someone other than himself operate the projector. The operator should be thoroughly familiar with the machine and should have the projector and screen set up in advance. Delay in getting the meeting under way is one of the surest ways to kill the interest of the group.

The following outline may be useful in conducting the session:

1. Make a few introductory remarks, stating the question to be discussed in as interesting a manner as possible.
2. Show the film.
3. Make a short talk (three or four minutes), summarizing the contents of the film and presenting the agenda to be followed.
4. Lead the group in discussion of each of the issues in the agenda.
5. Sum up the discussion.

ADAPTING DISCUSSION TO A LARGE GROUP

The methods recommended in this book will not be found satisfactory for groups of more than twenty or twenty-five persons. In a larger group real conversation is hardly possible, and the most that can be expected is forum discussion, in which some members of the audience participate by addressing questions to a speaker or by expressing their own views in short speeches. Such discussion may of course be profitable, especially if preceded by a systematic presentation of the subject by one or more well-informed speakers; but there is increasing demand for a procedure suitable for large groups that will preserve at least some of the values of round-table discussion. Two such procedures are available.

Multiple round tables.—If all members of a large group wish to participate actively in the discussion, they should be divided for a part of the session into several small groups. The person

in charge of the meeting delivers to the entire group the introductory talk referred to earlier in the chapter and closes his statement by proposing an agenda. The group then breaks up into smaller groups of eight or ten each, which meet separately for an hour of informal discussion. During this period each group follows the agenda under the guidance of its own moderator. The groups then reassemble. Each leader reports briefly on the result of discussion in his group, after which all participate for 20 minutes in general discussion addressed primarily to those points on which the groups have reached contradictory conclusions. The person in charge of the meeting presides over the forum and at its close sums up the consensus of the entire group as it has been revealed in the leaders' reports and in the general discussion.

The success of the method obviously depends very much on the competence of the leaders assigned to moderate discussion in the small groups. If they are selected at random without reference to their qualifications, the results will be disappointing. An organization wishing to employ the method regularly should make provision for recruiting and training a staff of moderators. When such provision is made, the method can be highly satisfactory. It has been used successfully with groups of a hundred, and presumably the number could be even larger.

In some cases the seating arrangement may present a problem. When the larger group breaks up after the introductory talk, the smaller groups may adjourn to nearby rooms for the informal discussion period and then reassemble for the closing forum discussion. This is reasonably satisfactory if enough small rooms are available, but adjourning and reassembling consume time and cause some noise and confusion. If the assembly room is large enough, it is perhaps better to provide in that room enough tables, each seating eight or ten, to accommodate the entire membership. The tables should of course be placed far enough apart to ensure that the groups do not interfere with each other. Members seat themselves at the tables as they enter the room and remain in their places during the entire session. All three parts of

the program are then provided for without the necessity of shifting chairs or leaving the room.

Panel discussion.—In another adaptation of discussion procedure to a large group, a panel of from four to eight persons and a moderator are seated on the platform in a semicircle facing the audience. After the moderator has presented the introductory statement, he leads the panel in discussion while the audience listens. Usually he reserves a half hour at the close of the panel discussion for questions and remarks from the audience, or he interrupts the panel at convenient points to permit a few minutes of participation by the audience. During both the panel discussion and the audience participation the tone of the meeting should be informal, and panel members should remain seated while speaking.

This method also has been used widely and with marked success. Its value depends very much on the competence of the panel. It should represent a diversity of background and viewpoint, and its members must speak up with enough animation to be heard by the audience and to hold interest. It is well for the moderator to meet with the panel members in advance to acquaint them with the procedure to be followed and with the agenda. In some cases he may wish to have their advice in drawing up the agenda. Usually the members of the panel are experts on the problem to be discussed, though well-informed laymen are sometime also useful.

Perhaps the difficulties most often encountered are that the panel members deliver speeches to the audience instead of discussing the question among themselves, or that they forget the audience entirely and fail to make themselves heard. These difficulties can usually be avoided if the moderator discusses procedure with the panel in advance.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RADIO PANEL

The informal face-to-face discussion in small groups with which we are concerned in this book has little in common with public discussion as carried on through such mediums of mass communication as the radio. Yet one form—the panel discussion suggested at the close of the preceding chapter—is readily adapted to broadcasting and is increasingly popular on the air. The "Chicago Round Table of the Air" and the "Northwestern Reviewing Stand" are heard nationally, and many local stations regularly present similar programs. Widely accepted as sound public education, they are, when well conducted, more interesting than most other forms of radio discussion.

The radio panel discussion is a program of informal conversation, usually 30 minutes in length, on a topic of public interest. Usually the panel consists of three or four members and a leader, who prepares the program and moderates the discussion. This arrangement seems to be identical with that already considered in Chapter 10—conversation by a small group for the benefit of a larger group which listens. But while the situations have much in common and most of the suggestions of the preceding chapter are applicable to radio discussion, there are also important differences between the two forms.

It must be understood, for example, that the purpose of radio discussion is not to reach agreement among the panel members. In the brief period of time available for discussion it is not to be expected that any member will change his opinion. Nor is it desirable that he should; in most cases he is on the panel to represent a particular point of view, and the argument will be presented and criticized more effectively if no agreement is reached. The purpose of radio discussion is not to resolve differences of opinion in the panel, but to interest and inform the

listener and to clarify his thinking. Ignoring this and other conditions peculiar to the radio situation may result in a program uninteresting or unintelligible to the listening audience.

The special problems that arise in radio discussion concern the preparation of the program, the procedure followed in the broadcasting studio, and the conduct of the discussion by participants and moderator.*

PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAM

The topic.—Radio discussion may be either informational or controversial. When a psychiatrist, a public health officer, and a judge discuss mental ill health as a public problem, there may be little difference of opinion among them regarding the seriousness of the problem or the measures required to solve it. The purpose of the discussion is to sharpen awareness of the problem on the part of the public, to present useful information regarding it, and to suggest some of the considerations involved in its solution. Low-cost government housing invites more sharply controversial discussion. By appointing to the panel a real-estate broker, a private builder, a social worker, and a government housing official it probably would be possible to ensure a sharp difference of opinion. Either type of program may be interesting and informative, but before the panel is selected it should be clear which type is desired.

For either type of program the topic, to hold attention, must possess some initial interest for the audience; the discussion form itself will not create interest where none exists. In this connection it should be remembered that as controversy is the most important single factor of interest, topics chosen for informational programs must be especially interesting to hold attention. Even

* For many of the suggestions made in this chapter the author is indebted to Professor Harrison B. Summers, Director of the Radio Programming Division of the Department of Speech at the Ohio State University, formerly Manager of the Public Service Division of the American Broadcasting Company.

when the topics are carefully chosen, a steady diet of informational discussion will hardly build up the listening audience. Incidentally, the topic for either type of discussion challenges attention more sharply if expressed as a question, Why is mental health our number-one public health problem? Should the federal government provide low-cost housing?

Selecting the panel.—Advice on the selection of radio panels always seems a counsel of perfection. The perfect panel member is difficult to find, and a panel made up entirely of such members has probably not yet been heard on the air. But it is useful to know what to look for.

The panel should be composed of at least three and preferably not more than four persons in addition to the moderator. The radio audience can identify the speakers only by the sound of their voices and by hearing them address each other by name. It is difficult at best for the hearer to know which member is speaking; when more than five voices are heard, it is almost impossible to identify them. For informational discussion three is a satisfactory number; four (two on each side) is perhaps preferable when the discussion is to be controversial.

If possible, avoid a panel composed entirely of inexperienced members. Ability to participate effectively in discussion grows with practice, and familiarity with the special requirements of microphone technique is desirable. The nervousness or ineptitude of one or two inexperienced members will give the moderator trouble enough; he will not wish to cope with four beginners at the same time if he can avoid it.

Regarding the panel members' intellectual equipment for discussion, several points are worth noting. The members should be well informed on the topic. Usually they are experts on it, though a layman with a special background of experience may sometimes have much to contribute. And they should be persons with definite views on the subject. When controversial discussion is desired, care should be taken to ensure a difference of opinion within the panel; and for informational programs diversity of

background and viewpoint lends richness and variety to the discussion. In general the more diversity of background and variety of resource represented in the panel, the better the discussion will be. It is desirable, however, that all of the members be operating at about the same level of intellectual sophistication; the professional economist and the "man in the street" can seldom contribute effectively to the same discussion.

The panel member's personality is also a factor in successful radio discussion. The person who is lively, articulate, and forceful, who is warm, sympathetic, and colorful, who has a gift for concrete illustration and pungent expression is a valuable member. His articulation must be reasonably good if he is to make himself understood over the air. And a good voice helps, though in this respect variety also is useful; it helps to identify the speakers. A somewhat harsh or strident voice that would be unpleasant to listen to for an hour may afford a welcome contrast to other voices on the program. The contrast between men's and women's voices serves the same purpose.

The preliminary meeting.—It is usually a mistake to rehearse a panel discussion. Detailed knowledge in advance of what the other fellow will say and of what we will say in reply destroys spontaneity. But for certain other purposes a preliminary meeting of moderator and panel is indispensable. For one thing the members need to become well enough acquainted to feel comfortable together. This suggests the desirability of meeting at the luncheon or dinner table, where conviviality can be combined with the more serious business of planning the program.

The principal purpose of the meeting is to work out a simple agenda indicating the points to be covered in the discussion. The suggestions in Chapter 4 on mapping the problem have little application here, for in a 30-minute discussion there can be no pretense of examining the subject thoroughly. The agenda should be based rather on the following considerations: What issues will the audience wish to hear discussed? What issues is this panel

most interested in discussing? On what issues does the panel have the sharpest difference of opinion?

To discover the answers to the last two questions the moderator cannot do better than invite the members of the panel to plunge into an exploratory discussion of the topic. If he stirs them up occasionally with a provocative question and avoids guiding the conversation, he will soon learn what they wish to talk about and where they disagree. He should then interrupt their discussion and ask them to work out an agenda, giving due consideration to the information, interest, and expectation of the radio audience. The four or five points making up the agenda agreed upon should be arranged in a convenient order and phrased as questions. The moderator and the panel members will have copies of this agenda before them during the broadcast. A momentary awkwardness in starting discussion of the several issues may be avoided by deciding in advance which panel member is to speak first on each issue.

If some of the members are inexperienced in radio discussion, the moderator should indicate the procedure to be followed in the studio and explain any hand signals he may intend to use. An elaborate system of signals is worse than useless; the inexperienced member will not remember what they mean and probably will be distracted and disconcerted by them. The following signals, however, are nearly self-explanatory, and their use helps the moderator to control the discussion without interrupting it.

While one member is speaking, another who wishes to follow holds up his forefinger, and the moderator gives him the floor in advance by pointing to him. If several raise their forefingers at the same time, the moderator indicates by pointing which is to speak next. If, while one member is speaking, the moderator glances at another with elevated eyebrow, he means to inquire, Do you wish to come in next? The member responds by shaking his head affirmatively or negatively. If the moderator wishes to interrupt a speaker, he holds up the palm of his hand toward him, meaning to say, Close your present sentence quickly.

By the use of these signals the moderator will escape two difficulties not otherwise easily avoided: dead spaces in the discussion when for several moments no one speaks, and collision between two members who start to speak at the same moment. Both detract from the interest of the program.

STUDIO PROCEDURE

In the broadcasting studio, members of the panel and the moderator are seated around a table with one or more microphones before them. The program announcer is stationed at another microphone in the same room. The engineer, usually visible in the control room through a soundproof window, may wish to check the voices of the speakers after they have taken their places. Each speaks a few sentences, and the position of the microphone on the table is adjusted to ensure a satisfactory balance of voices. For the best results the speakers should sit well forward in their chairs with elbows on the table and when addressing each other should avoid turning their faces away from the microphone. When these precautions are observed, it is unnecessary to speak more loudly than in ordinary conversation. Care should be taken not to touch the microphone, pound the table, or rustle papers.

As the program goes on the air, a red light flashes on in the studio and the engineer points to the program announcer. The announcer introduces the program, usually mentioning the topic to be discussed and introducing the moderator. At the conclusion of his remarks he points to the moderator, who is in charge from that point on.

The moderator states the question, unless it has already been stated by the announcer, and introduces the panel, mentioning each member by name, indicating his official position, if any, and adding a few words regarding his qualifications to discuss the topic. In some cases he may prefer to have each member introduce himself by giving his name. The moderator then makes a few remarks to prepare the audience for the discussion. He may,

for example, say something to arouse interest in the topic, mention the principal issues to be covered in the discussion, and set forth some of the facts surrounding the problem. These introductory remarks, however, should be very brief; seldom should they take more than a half dozen sentences. If many facts must be presented, it will be more interesting to have the panel bring them out before proceeding to the controversial issues.

It is the moderator's responsibility to distribute the available time among the various issues on the agenda, to make a 1- or 2-minute summary of the discussion at the end and thank the panel members for their participation, and to return the microphone to the announcer in time for his concluding remarks. To keep on schedule and close in time he will find it useful to have a stop watch on the table before him. The panel must preserve complete silence during the announcer's final remarks; the program is on the air until the red light in the studio goes off.

PARTICIPATING IN THE DISCUSSION

Most of the suggestions in Chapter 6 on participating in discussion apply to radio discussion. The participant's attitude should be one of courtesy, geniality, and evident interest in the topic; he should speak up freely, refrain from interrupting others, be brief, follow the ball, and express himself without giving unnecessary offense to those who disagree with him. But for radio discussion some of these suggestions require special emphasis, and several additional suggestions can be made.

On the air it is especially important that the panel member speak up promptly, coming in immediately on the heels of the preceding speaker; otherwise the frequent occurrence of blank spots in the discussion makes the program drag. It is important also that the conversation be brisk. The member who hems and haws or speaks with undue deliberation is tiresome to listen to. As naturalness and spontaneity are important virtues in a radio program, the members should speak extemporaneously and without notes and should avoid reading long quotations from their

favorite authorities. Finally, they should use concrete and colorful language, working in humor and human-interest material wherever possible. Deprived of the use of gesture and facial expression as rhetorical devices, the radio speaker must be especially interesting to hold attention.

It has already been suggested that to enjoy the program fully the listener must be able to identify the speakers. The members of the panel can assist him by addressing each other by name and by frequently including in their remarks a brief reference to their own interests and background, which helps to identify the speaker, or a reference to the background or interests of the person addressed, which helps to identify the next speaker.

MODERATING THE DISCUSSION

In moderating radio discussion the leader will find useful the attitudes of geniality, interest, impartiality, and responsibility recommended in an earlier chapter; and he will find that his work consists essentially of regulating, focusing, guiding, clarifying, and pointing up the discussion. But on the air some of these functions require special attention. For example, he must clarify the discussion not only for members of the panel, but also for the unseen audience, which is less familiar with the topic than the speakers and more likely to become confused. If a member loses his temper, the moderator must step in immediately. He cannot ignore, as he may do occasionally in leading ordinary discussion, the member whose remarks are in bad taste or who speaks too long. And while he would prefer not to break in on a speaker, he must not hesitate to do so if the situation requires prompt action.

Regulating the discussion presents two problems peculiar to discussion on the air. When two members talk at the same time, the listening audience cannot understand what either of them is saying. Interruptions, therefore, are more serious than in ordinary discussion. The use of a simple system of hand signals helps a great deal, and the moderator may need to be more firm than

in conducting discussion off the air. And blank spots must be avoided; as the listener cannot see the panel members, he loses interest immediately when no one is speaking. When the member who is to have the floor next does not speak up promptly, the moderator must step in at once to fill the gap.

Often the moderator will not know until he is on the air whether his panel members are the kind who will interrupt each other or who will be too slow in coming in. Consequently even more alertness and resource are required than in leading ordinary discussion.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

DISCUSSION IN THE CLASSROOM

According to one experienced teacher and counselor of teachers, "The highest of all teaching skills is that of *guiding group thinking*."* Few educators would challenge the statement, though much classroom practice belies its acceptance.

The ability to stimulate and direct cooperative thinking deserves a high place among the teaching skills both for its difficulty and for its importance in the educational process. In no other phase of his work does the teacher need more sympathetic appreciation of the individual student's interests and needs or more complete objectivity in handling ideas; perhaps in no other is he called upon to be so deft and clearheaded. And yet it is in leading class discussion that he can most effectively stimulate independent thinking, inculcate standards of relevance and cogency, and develop habits of cooperative thought and action.

Those who advocate a wider use of discussion do not mean to imply that it is the only valid classroom procedure. The lecture is more effective in presenting a body of accepted fact or principle; and the methodical defense of an opinion or point of view, either by the teacher or the student, is often useful. But when the object is to stimulate and clarify thinking, discussion is more effective than formal address.

Though widely accepted on theoretical grounds, the use of genuine discussion in the classroom is rare. This striking discrepancy between profession and practice may be due partly to the fact that much literature on discussion stresses the philosophy of group thinking without suggesting procedures for its application. Of necessity any teacher's equipment is in large part a collection of habitual practices. His accustomed methods, procedures, and devices, picked up from other teachers or devised

* W. H. Lancelot, *Handbook of Teaching Skills,* 1929, p. 147.

by himself, are his stock in trade; without them he would be almost helpless. This may explain why it is often possible to convert a teacher to a new philosophy of education without effecting any noticeable change in his classroom practice. The teacher who adopts a new approach to his work must have a new set of habits.

The purpose of this chapter is to bridge the gap between the philosophy and practice of discussion by suggesting specific procedures for use in the classroom. For illustrative purposes suggestions will be couched in terms directly applicable to the four courses in which discussion seems especially appropriate—social studies, history, speech, and English—but a resourceful teacher can adapt many of the methods to other courses or to such extra-curricular activities as assembly programs and student-council meetings.

METHOD IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

In classes not numbering more than twenty, round-table discussion involving the entire class is effective. In a larger group it is less so; either discussion degenerates into the conventional recitation, or a few members do all of the talking while the rest listen. As most classes are too large for effective round-table discussion, a panel should usually be employed. In panel discussion a selected group of from four to six members, who have prepared themselves for the discussion, are seated in a semicircle facing the class. During the first two thirds of the class period the panel members discuss the question among themselves, after which other members of the class participate by expressing their own views or addressing questions to the panel. The program is conducted on the assumption that while the members of the panel are chiefly responsible for previous study of the question, all members of the class hope to make up their minds on it.

As in all group thinking, the seating arrangement is important. Unfortunately the arrangement in many classrooms is both unsatisfactory and difficult to change. For round-table discussion the members of the class should be seated around a large table

or around the outside of a square formed by placing several small tables together. Where this is impracticable, they may be seated in one or more rows of chairs arranged in a semicircle. If the classroom is furnished with chairs or benches arranged in straight rows and permanently fixed to the floor, a strenuous effort should be made to find a more suitable meeting place. When the panel method is employed, the panel should be seated around a small table or in a semicircle facing the class.

Whether round-table or panel discussion is used, the teacher usually should serve as moderator. The quality of the discussion depends so much on the moderator's skill that a succession of inept student leaders soon destroys confidence in the method. Some students can learn to lead discussion well, and those with aptitude should have an opportunity to develop their skill; but to have members of the class take turns in the moderator's chair jeopardizes the success of the program. Nearly all, however, can learn to participate effectively if the discussion is skillfully led.

A program of discussion in the classroom is more likely to succeed if the teacher explains in advance what is expected of the participants. An informal talk on the nature and purpose of group thinking, on the attitudes favorable to effective participation, and on the importance of developing good discussion habits will do much to ensure the success of classroom discussion.

CLASSROOM PROJECTS

In social studies.—Perhaps more than any other course in the curriculum the course in social studies invites use of the discussion method. Dealing with sharply controversial issues, it affords a unique opportunity to develop appreciation of the distinction between fact and opinion, to cultivate a tolerant and cooperative attitude toward those of opposing views, and to impress upon the student the importance of his responsibility as a citizen. And it is in achieving precisely these objectives that group thinking is most useful. Many of the textbooks in social studies, too, are well adapted for use in connection with discussion. One, for

example,* devotes a chapter to each of the main problem areas in American democracy and in each chapter proposes a controversial question for discussion, presents an impartial statement of fact on it, lists the principal arguments pro and con, and suggests references for further reading.

We will suppose that a class of twenty-five high-school seniors using such a textbook has reached the chapter on immigration. When the class has read the chapter, one or two days are devoted to recitation and to round-table discussion addressed to the following questions: On what topics connected with immigration do we need further information? and On what specific problems do we wish to make up our minds? In answer to the first question the class decides to hear a 10-minute informational report on each of the following topics: Our "Statue of Liberty" tradition as expressed in official documents and the utterances of national leaders; The history of immigration to this country; The history of our immigration laws; An analysis of our present population in terms of religion, race, and national origin; The existence in America of discrimination against minority groups. The teacher appoints five members of the class to prepare the oral reports, perhaps suggesting references for further reading on each topic.

In answer to the second question, the class decides that after it has heard the reports it will devote one class period to consideration of each of the following controversial questions: How have our immigrants affected American life? Should racial, religious, and national groups attempt to preserve their identity in America? How can discrimination against such groups be most effectively combated? What should be our future immigration policy? For discussion of each question the teacher appoints a panel of five members of the class representing at least some initial difference of opinion, suggests references for further reading, and arranges a meeting of each panel outside of class to work out an agenda for use in discussion.

* John T. Greenan and Albert B. Meredith, *Everyday Problems of American Democracy*, 1938.

Each member of the class now has an assignment that will occupy him for several days. In class two periods are devoted to hearing the informational reports, each report being followed by a question period during which members of the class may probe the speaker for further information. If unsatisfied with a report, the class may request the speaker to do further reading and bring in a supplementary report. In any case the speakers are expected to continue with their reading and to serve as resource persons during the panel discussions to follow.

When the reports have been heard, five days are devoted to panel discussion. On the third day of discussion, for example, one of the panels and the teacher, who is to serve as moderator, are seated around a small table facing the class. The question to be discussed has been phrased as follows: How can discrimination against minority groups be most effectively combated? The moderator states the question and presents the following agenda, which he has written on the blackboard:

1. Can the problem be solved by legislation?
2. Would an educational program in the public schools help?
3. What should each of us do when he encounters members of minority groups in
   a) School?
   b) Recreational activities?
   c) Social life?

During discussion the panel occasionally turns to one of the resource persons for additional information. As it completes its consideration of each major issue in the agenda, the other members of the class are invited to participate for a few minutes by expressing their own views or addressing questions to the panel members. At the close of the session the moderator sums up the discussion. One class period often seems inadequate for discussion of a controversial question, and if the schedule permits, more than one day may be devoted to some of the questions.

When the panel discussions have been completed, a final class period of round-table discussion is devoted to summarizing the two weeks' work on immigration.

In history.—The class in American history follows a similar pattern. When the class has studied the chapters in the textbook dealing with the American Civil War, for example, and has devoted several days to recitation, the following question is suggested for round-table discussion: On what problems connected with the Civil War would we like to make up our minds? After discussion the class decides to hear panel discussion of the following questions: Was the Civil War unavoidable? Is agitation like that conducted by the abolitionists desirable? Have subsequent events justified Lincoln's emancipation of the slaves? What should have been the national policy toward the South after the Civil War?

For each question the teacher appoints a panel of five or six students to do further reading, to prepare an agenda, and to present a panel discussion.

At least one day is devoted to each of the controversial questions. As each panel concludes its discussion, the rest of the class is invited to participate by presenting argument or addressing questions to the panel members. Each member of the class not assigned to a panel also prepares a paper on one of the questions, in which he presents a reasoned defense of the answer he would make to the question.

In speech.—Unless the course in speech must be restricted to training in public speaking, it should include study and practice in group discussion. Important as it may be that the student acquire skill in the preparation and delivery of speeches, it is no less important that he be effective in informal discussion. As a matter of fact, after leaving school he will more often participate in group discussion in the committee room than deliver public addresses from the platform. The teacher should present some of the material contained in the earlier chapters of this book and arrange a series of round-table or panel discussions, each followed

by critical comment and suggestion on the student's performance.

Even if the course deals only with public speaking, some use of discussion will help to motivate the student speaker and guide him in the preparation of his speech. If four or five students are interested in the international control of atomic energy, they may present a panel discussion of the topic, inviting the class to intervene at convenient points with question and comment. Several days later the same students appear in a debate or symposium on the subject, each defending his own view. The clash of argument at close quarters in informal discussion has stimulated the student speaker's thinking, familiarized him in detail with views opposed to his own, and informed him in advance where other members of the class stand on the question. In consequence he is likely to plan his speech more intelligently and to deliver it more effectively.

In English.—In courses dealing with literature and English composition discussion may seem less useful. Yet here also it will often motivate the student and stimulate and clarify his thinking. Writing on controversial topics—and these are not confined to politics and economics—displays more energy and more sense of purpose and direction when prompted by a lively discussion. The informal exchange of views stimulates the impulse to communicate and encourages the writer to feel that he has an audience and is operating in a real situation.

In the study of literature, too, discussion serves a purpose. If the class has just finished reading *David Copperfield,* it will enjoy a series of round-table sessions on such questions as these: Are the characters in the novel fully motivated? Is the novel significant chiefly as a social document or as a work of literary art? How does the England of Dickens compare with the America we know? Such discussion prompts independent thinking, while a series of lectures from the teacher's desk may produce apathy or even an active dislike for a book which, properly taught, would give the student an interesting and stimulating experience. Out

of the discussion may grow a thoughtful essay in which the student presents at length his own appraisal of the book.

So with the study of poetry. *The Ancient Mariner,* when taught line by line, stanza by stanza, becomes a dreary waste of iambics and ballad meters. Enlivened by classroom discussion of Coleridgean symbols and their larger significance, led by a teacher adept in the discussion method and aware of the meaning of the poem, the beauty and universality of an English masterpiece may so emerge as to become a permanent possession of the student rather than merely one more assignment to be finished and forgotten.

Many classics, when discussed informally by teacher and students after careful reading, may come to life for boys and girls, who by sharing one another's views make great books their own heritage.

THE TEACHER AS MODERATOR

It is assumed in this chapter that the teacher who leads class discussion will equip himself with the methods recommended in earlier chapters; when moderating class discussion, he will need all of the skill he can develop. Our purpose here is not to emphasize that need, but to raise a more fundamental question: How can the teacher be a strictly impartial moderator without abandoning his role as teacher? Is not the teacher expected to impart knowledge and to inculcate certain attitudes universally accepted as desirable? How can he discharge this responsibility if he must remain impartial while leading discussion? The issue is too real to be brushed aside lightly.

The problem is encountered in the discussion of any controversial issue in the classroom, and such issues are not confined to the realm of public affairs; they arise in any area where difference of opinion occurs. While moderating discussion, the teacher may feel that the class, or panel, is arriving at erroneous conclusions based largely on ignorance or prejudice. Fortunately he

can do much to remedy this situation without abandoning his role as moderator. In appointing members of the class to a panel he should take care that all points of view are represented, even though some of them are unpopular with the class as a whole. And while leading discussion he may properly call attention to facts that are being ignored or to arguments that are receiving less attention than they deserve. This he can do without becoming a party to the argument or expressing a preference for any particular conclusion. He is acting not as a custodian of truth, but as an exponent of sound method in thinking.

But in spite of such direction from the moderator's chair, may not the class arrive at what the teacher regards as erroneous conclusions? It certainly may. But by definition a controversial topic is one on which the truth is not certainly known, and the teacher himself may be the one in error. In any case the teacher should be concerned primarily with *how* his students think rather than with *what* they think. To dictate what the class shall think on a controversial question is to regard the student as a means to an end, and it is a cardinal principle of education that the student himself is the end of the teacher's endeavor.

Suppose, however, that at the close of a discussion the students turn to the teacher with the question, "What do *you* think?" In response to such a question there certainly can be no objection to the teacher's expressing his own views, provided he does not attempt to impose them on the class.

A somewhat different problem arises when the teacher employs discussion in areas that he does not regard as controversial. He should of course remember that what is not controversial today may become so tomorrow. Nevertheless there is a large body of what, for the present at least, the world has agreed to call accepted fact. To take an extreme example, the solution of quadratic equations by means of the quadratic formula is not a subject of controversy among those who understand quadratic equations. In history, too—though here we are on less solid ground—many facts can be regarded as established. Group dis-

cussion of such matters serves no useful purpose in the classroom or outside of it.

Yet to recognize that the discussion method is not applicable in the realm of established fact does not quite solve the problem. Between the areas of the controversial and the noncontroversial lies a shadowy zone of principles, attitudes, and value judgments whose truth cannot be demonstrated but which our age, our civilization, or our nation regards as established. We sometimes speak of this body of material as our cultural heritage, and we understand it to be one of the teacher's functions to pass it on to future generations. Thus we expect him to inculcate the principles of democracy on his students and to teach them the virtues of tolerance and respect for others. But we are now on somewhat difficult ground if we advise the teacher that the discussion method is applicable in this area. A class discussion may reach the conclusion that dictatorship is preferable to democracy or that discrimination against racial minorities is desirable.

One possible solution may be suggested by anyone familiar with the discussion method. Is it not sometimes possible for a skillful moderator to steer discussion toward a predetermined "sound" conclusion without appearing to do so? It is. By throwing out a series of carefully prepared questions to provoke discussion and then by elaborating upon the favorable responses and ignoring the unfavorable, a moderator can sometimes bring a group to a desired conclusion without any member's suspecting that the thinking of the group has been manipulated for an ulterior purpose. But however good the purpose, the method must be condemned. It is a perversion of group thinking and in the end is self-defeating. Those whose responses were ignored have not really been convinced, and the more observant will eventually detect the advocate behind the teacher's mask of simulated impartiality.

In the long run it is sounder to regard as frankly controversial any matter upon which difference of opinion actually exists. As a matter of fact, no belief is so widely held or so deeply cherished

that it is not being challenged by someone somewhere; and if students do not know this now, the sooner they learn it the better. Nor should we regret the tendency of young people to examine traditional beliefs critically; each generation must do its own thinking. It is comforting to reflect that in so far as traditional belief is sound, it will survive critical examination; for free discussion is a better preservative of truth than indoctrination.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DISCUSSION IN INDUSTRY

Traditionally, commercial and industrial firms, like units of the armed forces, have been organized on the authoritarian principle. The president of the firm, responsible only to the board of directors, is the sole source of authority within the organization. He delegates authority and responsibility to his immediate subordinates, the major executives of the firm, who in turn delegate it to their own subordinates, and so on down the line of command to the individual employee. The power to formulate policy, though divided among the members of the administrative hierarchy, is vested in individuals, not in groups. Under this arrangement group thinking has no place in the administrative process. While an executive may summon his staff to a meeting for the purpose of making announcements, issuing orders, or explaining directives, he does not invite them to participate collectively in the formulation of policy.

In practice probably no industrial firm operates exclusively on the line-of-command principle; at all administrative levels executives occasionally seek the advice of subordinates in deciding a difficult question of policy. But conference for this purpose can hardly be regarded as typical of the administrative process in most industrial organizations.

In the business world generally, however, a more democratic conception of the administrative process is finding increasing favor among practical administrators. According to the new view, the functions of formulating and executing policy should not be sharply divorced; when the staff which is to carry out a policy has a hand in its formulation, the policy is often more soundly conceived and more effectively executed. Group responsibility for the formulation of policy discourages private griping, develops pride in the organization, and in accomplishing these ends makes

every member of the organization from vice-president to machinist an effective public-relations officer of the firm. These are important advantages. Against them must be set the undeniable fact that group thinking consumes more time than decision by one person. Often the necessary time is not available. While the line-of-command conception is unlikely to disappear from industrial management, it is apparently giving ground to a more democratic conception of administration.

TYPES OF CONFERENCE

If a conference is regarded as any meeting at which several persons are invited to think together, it is clear that the business conference may serve many purposes. In the practice of some industrial and commercial firms it will be found serving at least the following ends: to exchange information, to train employees, to advise superior officers on questions of policy, to formulate policy, and to adjust differences between two or more groups within the organization.

The conference to exchange information does not attempt to reach agreement on the solution of a problem. Its purpose rather is to pool information and experience for such use as the individual conferees may care to make of it. The foremen in a plant, for example, may meet to share their experience on a problem that all encounter in their work, perhaps that of accident prevention or the maintenance of morale. No attempt is made to agree on a uniform policy, but each conferee hopes to profit from the experience of his colleagues.

In purpose and method the conference to exchange information has much in common with the training conference, which has been widely used for many years to provide in-service training for certain types of experienced employees. The sales force of an insurance company, for example, may be called in to the central office to devote several days to discussion of method in selling. A group of ten or twelve salesmen may represent an aggregate of a hundred years of experience in the field; often

they can learn more from each other than from an expert on salesmanship. Typical problems encountered in the field are analyzed, and an attempt is made to work out cooperatively the principles and procedures most effective in dealing with them. In some cases the conclusions reached are embodied in directives issued to the sales force; in others each salesman is free to pick and choose from among the recommendations growing out of the discussion. The training conference is applicable to any group of employees who are engaged in the same type of work and have enough knowledge and experience to contribute to group thinking.

Any executive occasionally seeks advice on questions of policy from individual members of his staff. Less frequently he calls a staff meeting to discuss a problem and work out cooperatively a set of recommendations for his consideration. An excellent example of the systematic use of the advisory conference is the Junior Board set up in 1932 by President Charles P. McCormick, of McCormick and Company, Baltimore, and subsequently established in some five hundred other business organizations. The Junior Board is composed of promising junior executives from all departments of the organization who meet regularly to consider problems of policy and to formulate recommendations for consideration in the front office. It is understood that the board's powers are advisory only but that any proposal backed by its unanimous recommendation will receive careful consideration by the appropriate senior executive.

The potential values of group thinking are of course more fully realized when the group is entrusted with power to formulate policy rather than merely to advise a superior officer. It is not always feasible for an executive, who will be held personally responsible for the result, to delegate policy-making power to a staff of subordinates. Yet increasingly executives are finding it both feasible and desirable. Often the power must be exercised under carefully defined limitations. A department manager, for example, may call together his staff of junior executives and say,

"I am turning over to you the problem of revising our departmental policy on the use of our stenographic and secretarial staff. If you can reach agreement, I will follow your recommendations. But note that no policy is acceptable that would increase the department's payroll or violate our contract with the union."

A group charged with the responsibility of solving a problem of policy will sometimes find that no solution is possible without the cooperation of other departments of the organization. The foremen of a shop, requested by their supervisor to clear floor space by prompter removal of the finished product, may find no solution within the shop itself. The pressure of other shops on the transportation system of the plant may be such that this particular shop can expect no relief unless transportation services are expanded or reallocated. Clearly the situation calls for a conference between the transportation manager and the supervisors of the various shops within the plant. In any large organization employing democratic procedures the intergroup conference plays an important role.

CONDITIONS OF PROFITABLE DISCUSSION

The conditions of profitable discussion enumerated in Chapter 2 are as essential to success in the business conference as in any other form of group thinking. But in a busy plant or office it is not always easy to provide favorable conditions. Often a special effort must be made at this point if the conference method is to succeed.

The group invited to confer should be made up of those who are concerned with the problem to be discussed, who will be expected to carry out any policy adopted, or who will be affected by the policy. And they should be persons of sufficient knowledge and experience to make a real contribution to the discussion. Unless so constituted, the group will attach little importance to the business before it; for it will feel either that no problem exists or that it is incapable of solving it. In other words, the constitution of the group has much to do with its motivation.

Other factors also affect motivation. Prominent among them is the relationship existing between superior and subordinate members of the organization. An attitude of hostility, fear, or suspicion on the part of the subordinate or of arrogance or intolerance on the part of the superior makes good discussion impossible, especially when both are seated at the same conference table. If the group does not understand whether it is empowered to formulate policy or only to offer advice, or if in the past its recommendations have apparently been ignored in the front office, it will attach little importance to its conference work. Poor motivation results also from holding perfunctory meetings at which no important problem is presented for discussion.

The size of the group is an important factor in successful conference. It may sometimes be as small as three or four or as large as twenty. Twelve to fifteen is perhaps the ideal number. A very small group usually does not represent a sufficient diversity of background and viewpoint for profitable discussion, and a very large one cannot confer informally.

The ideal conference room is just large enough to seat the group comfortably, preferably around a large rectangular table. It contains a portable blackboard and wall space for the display of charts and maps; it is well lighted and comfortably heated; it is free from the intrusion of persons not attending the conference and from such distracting noises as the sound of machinery and the clatter of typewriters. Unfortunately the ideal room is seldom available. In many cases it is necessary to confer in the office of one of the members, usually that of the executive who is calling the conference. When such an office must be used, precautions should be taken to reduce interruptions to the minimum by having a secretary screen visitors and reroute all but the most urgent telephone calls. If at all possible, a special conference room should be provided.

Occasionally a group may find it possible and desirable to meet outside of working hours, but most conferences are held on company time. This is perhaps just as well. It impresses upon

the conferee the importance the organization attaches to his conference work. The conference should be set at an hour that will occasion least inconvenience to those attending; it should seldom last longer than 1½ hours; it should open and close promptly.

It is the conference leader's responsibility to arrange in advance for the presentation of any information the conference may need in its work. He may prepare maps, charts, or diagrams for wall display, arrange exhibits for use in demonstration, prepare printed or typed copies of statistical material, or invite outside persons to attend for the purpose of supplying information. Of necessity conference involves a considerable investment of time. None of it should be wasted in idle speculation because the necessary information has not been made available; nor should the conference mark time while someone goes upstairs to find material that should have been at hand.

As in all forms of group thinking, the selection of the right man to lead the discussion is of vital importance. On this point nothing need be added here to the suggestions made in Chapter 7 except in regard to the situation arising in a business conference when the discussion leader is the superior officer of those attending the conference. He often will be. It is natural, for example, for a staff conference of junior executives to be conducted by the head of the department. Unfortunately the senior executive is not always a good discussion leader. He may have reached his present position in the organization through technical competence in a specialized field rather than through skill in working with groups and may have little aptitude, training, or experience for moderating discussion. Even when he has the necessary qualifications for leadership, some difficulty may arise from the very fact that he is the boss.

Little genuine group thinking will occur unless the superior officer lays aside the mantle of authority while in the moderator's chair. Those seated at the table must speak frankly if the conference is to succeed, and they will not do so unless convinced

that the boss can "take it." The leader should discourage apple polishing and give respectful and sympathetic attention to any contribution made. And some executives need to learn that the conference leader must be, first of all, a good listener rather than a voluminous talker. Usually he must avoid expressing his own opinion if he really wishes to know what his subordinates think.

Sometimes a qualified member from another department of the organization can be invited to lead the discussion. Among any group of executives there will be some with a flair for this type of work. The personnel director, for example, is likely to be well qualified for it. The fact that he is not an expert on the problem to be discussed does not disqualify him provided the discussion is not too technical for him to follow. Such a "guest" moderator probably should be at least the equal in organizational rank of those attending the conference.

An organization wishing to make considerable use of the conference method would do well to set up a training program for those who are expected to lead discussion. This is one point at which a reasonable degree of skill is necessary for satisfactory results.

PLANNING THE CONFERENCE

In following the suggestions contained in Chapter 7 the leader of discussion in a commercial or industrial organization may encounter several problems peculiar to the business setting. One concerns the leader's preparation for the conference.

That he must usually prepare and prepare carefully should go without saying; probably more business conferences fail through poor preparation than for any other reason. We have already noted the leader's responsibility to make arrangements in advance for the presentation of information that may be needed in discussion. What further planning should he do?

To be useful, discussion must usually be methodical; that is, it must follow a plan worked out in advance by the leader. This does not imply that the leader knows what conclusions the group

will reach; still less does it imply that he steers discussion toward predetermined conclusions. His plan of the conference consists not of conclusions to be agreed upon, but of steps to be taken in discussion or of questions to be raised and answered.

In Chapter 4 it was suggested that before a group launches into discussion of proposed solutions of a problem, it should devote some time to an analysis of the problem and the preparation of an agenda. During this preliminary discussion, it was suggested, the group will usually consider these questions:

1. What is the problem to be solved?
2. Out of what facts does it arise?
3. What objectives do we wish to achieve in solving it?
4. What specific solutions should we examine?

Having explored these matters, the group sets up an agenda, or list of questions, indicating the issues to be discussed in detail.

The earlier chapter may have seemed to imply that this period of preliminary discussion culminating in the framing of an agenda is usually brief and that sometimes the leader himself can do the preliminary thinking and prepare an agenda for the group. This is often true when the group is to consider a question of public policy that has already been under discussion. It is less true of a business conference, where often one cannot assume general understanding or agreement regarding what the problem is, what facts surround it, what objectives are to be achieved in solving it, or what solutions ought to be examined. The conference may need to spend a good deal of time in clearing up these matters before attempting to appraise solutions. It is seldom, therefore, that the leader can work out a detailed agenda in advance. Often his conference plan will indicate steps to be taken in discussion rather than detailed questions to be answered.

As the nature of the plan depends a good deal on the purpose of the conference and the circumstances surrounding it, the leader needs principles rather than rules of thumb to guide him. Let us consider the planning of several typical conferences.

Six foremen in a shop have agreed to meet in a series of confer-

ences to exchange information about their work. At the first meeting they intend only to survey the ground and select four or five problems for detailed examination at future meetings. Little planning need be done for the first meeting. After a few introductory remarks the leader raises the question, What difficulties do you encounter in your work? As members of the conference suggest difficulties, the leader writes them on a blackboard. After a brief consideration of each the group selects four or five that have been found especially perplexing by nearly all of those present, and agreement is reached regarding the order in which they will be considered at future meetings.

We will suppose that at the second session the group will exchange information on the problem of accident prevention. Both the nature of the problem and the objective to be attained are already clear and will require no discussion. What remedies will be proposed and what objections will be raised to each the leader cannot foresee. His plan of the conference, of necessity a simple one, may take the following form:

1. Brief introductory statement by the leader on the accident record of the plant.
2. Questions for discussion:
   a) What is the accident situation in your part of the shop?
   b) What are the underlying causes of accidents in the shop?
   c) What remedies have you tried and with what results?
   d) What new remedies would you propose?
3. Summary of the discussion.

Let us now suppose that a training conference for salesmen is to devote one of a series of sessions to the problem of how to approach the difficult prospect. At the preceding sessions it was agreed that the hostile prospect, the busy prospect, and the uninterested prospect present especially baffling problems. The leader has arranged to have each problem presented in a 5-minute dramatic skit in which prospect and salesman are impersonated

by members of the conference. At this conference the members hope to get beyond the mere exchange of information and to reach agreement on how best to approach each type of prospect. The leader's plan may take the following form:

1. Introductory remarks by the leader.
2. Dramatic presentation of each problem:
   a) The hostile prospect,
   b) The busy prospect,
   c) The uninterested prospect.
3. Questions for discussion of each problem:
   a) Why did the prospect react as he did?
   b) Could his reaction have been foreseen?
   c) How should he have been approached?
4. Summary of conclusions regarding methods to be followed in approaching each type of prospect.

Let us turn now to a conference that has been authorized to formulate a policy—a policy, let us say, regarding the use of the secretarial staff in an office. Under the existing arrangement in the office one secretary is assigned to the manager of the department; the others make up a pool on which any junior executive can draw when in need of secretarial help. Several men in the office have asked that a secretary be assigned to each of them permanently to take dictation and keep the files in order.

This conference differs in several respects from those described above. The conference is to solve a problem and formulate a policy which, if substantial agreement is reached, will be put into effect at once. The possible solution—that already requested by several of the men—is known in advance. The leader's plan for the conference might take the following form:

I. Statement of the problem by the leader.
II. Questions for discussion:
   1. In what way is the present situation unsatisfactory?

2. By what objectives are we to evaluate the proposed new policy?
   a) To increase the efficiency with which each executive's secretarial work is done?
   b) To ensure that each executive will have the services of a secretary when he needs them?
   c) To ensure that all of the secretaries are kept busy?
3. Would the proposed plan accomplish these objectives more fully than the present plan?
4. Would a combination of the present and the proposed plan achieve the objectives more fully than either plan alone?

III. Summary of conclusions reached.

IV. (If a change in policy has been agreed upon) What steps must be taken to put the new policy into effect?

An intergroup conference called to adjust an apparent conflict of interest between two or more departments of an organization does not present a problem essentially different from that posed by the intradepartmental conference. We may suppose that the supervisor of a shop in the plant has complained that the finished product is not removed promptly from his shop, and the transportation manager has been unwilling, or unable, to provide more adequate transportation services. One of the major executives has called into conference the transportation manager and the supervisors of the shops served by the transportation system. The leader's plan for the conference might run about as follows:

1. Statement of the problem by the leader
2. Statement by the complaining supervisor, the transportation manager, and others of the facts out of which the problem arises
3. Consideration of the objectives to be achieved by any solution adopted

4. Consideration of changes in the present policy in the light of the facts and the objectives agreed upon
5. Summary of conclusions reached
6. Consideration of steps to be taken to translate the conclusions into action

In all of these situations the leader's conference plan, though a simple one, serves the important purpose of ensuring that in its discussion the group will follow an orderly sequence of steps in its search for a solution. Typically the steps are as follows:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Statement of the facts
3. Consideration of objectives
4. Examination of proposals in the light of the facts and objectives agreed upon
5. Summary of the discussion
6. Consideration of means to implement the decision

THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

The negotiation of wage contracts by representatives of labor and management would be greatly facilitated by more of the spirit and method of group thinking. Occasionally, and increasingly, cooperative thinking does occur at the labor-management conference table; but it can hardly be considered typical of the procedures employed there.

While the advantages of cooperation in this phase of industrial life are obvious, the atmosphere in which wage negotiations are conducted is often unfavorable to group thinking. Those seated at the table are spokesmen for powerful groups not present and are, therefore, not entirely free agents. Often the interests of the two parties are, or are thought to be, in irreconcilable conflict. Back of the discussion lurks the threat of an appeal to force through the strike or the lockout. And the method of conducting the negotiations is sometimes unfortunate. The labor representa-

tives talk in terms of "demands," which management may "deny" or "grant." On both sides the attitude and intent implied in the phraseology used is inimical to cooperative thinking. In view of these difficulties it is not surprising that wage negotiation seldom achieves anything more satisfactory than a compromise which both parties accept reluctantly.

It would be idle to expect a radical change overnight in the method of negotiating contracts. The difficulties that embarrass negotiation are too real and too difficult to circumvent easily. Yet labor and management do have a substantial interest in common—the desire to avoid interruption of production. And in many cases they do think of themselves as partners in the industrial enterprise and conduct negotiations in a commendable spirit of cooperation.

While it is never easy to develop in a labor-management conference the mutual confidence and the cooperative spirit necessary for group thinking, some conditions and methods are more likely than others to create the desired atmosphere.

To begin with, it is essential that the moderator be strictly impartial and acceptable to both parties. No cooperative thinking is possible if anyone at the table regards the leader as a party to the argument. This will often necessitate calling in a moderator from outside the organization, though occasionally some member of the managerial staff has such a reputation for fairness and impartiality that he is acceptable to both sides.

Both parties should have the same number of representatives at the conference table, and the conferees should be so seated as to break up the labor and management groups. When union leader and management representative rub elbows, there is somewhat less danger that the conference will polarize immediately into two hostile factions.

Many conferences get off to a bad start with a formal statement of "demands" by the union and a counterstatement by management of the maximum "concessions" it is willing to make. After this opening nothing further is possible but a process of horse trad-

ing looking toward eventual compromise. More thinking will be done if each party presents, first, a factual statement of the situation as he sees it. The accuracy and relevance of a statement of fact can be examined more disinterestedly before it has been used to buttress argument. Preliminary discussion of the facts will also sometimes remove misunderstanding and reveal more common ground of agreement than was at first suspected.

It may also be desirable, after examining the facts and before considering proposals, to discuss the objectives (in terms of such factors as standard of living and rate of profit) that ought to be realized by the new contract. Here, too, there is more likelihood of finding common ground of agreement if concrete proposals and counterproposals have not yet been presented.

Each party should now be invited to present a proposal based on the previous discussion of facts and objectives. No attempt should be made to argue the merits of the proposals until both are thoroughly understood. Then the conference should proceed, first, to discussion of the points covered in both proposals, noting the points of agreement, if any, and threshing out one at a time the points of disagreement. Later, attention is turned to points covered in one proposal but not in the other.

In making the foregoing suggestions in the interest of a more cooperative approach to the negotiation of contracts, we do not mean to imply that the labor-management conference can always employ successfully the methods of group thinking. Under present conditions in industry an element of force, or the threat of force, is probably unavoidable. But the wage conference need not always be, as it so often is, a naked contest of power.

The prospects of cooperative thinking in the negotiation of contracts will be brighter when both labor and management more often select their representatives with a view to their skill in conference and especially when both provide their representatives with training for this difficult and important work.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE DISCUSSION CONFERENCE

The nature of group thinking imposes one inconvenient limitation on its use—it can be employed only in a small group. Yet in many situations it is desirable for a large number to participate cooperatively in the formulation of policy. A representative group of several hundred—or even several thousand—clergymen and laymen, for example, may wish to determine the attitude to be taken by the church on a current social problem; or several hundred representatives of labor, management, and government may wish to explore together the problems of industrial relations. The area in which group thinking by large numbers would be profitable is probably growing as our society becomes more complex; for increasingly many persons are affected by policy and can contribute usefully to its formulation.

As a matter of fact cooperative thinking often is employed by large groups in what we shall call the *discussion conference*. Such a conference is a gathering of from fifty to a thousand persons who devote several days, or weeks, to the consideration of a common problem and conduct their deliberations by informal discussion rather than by parliamentary debate. Meetings of this kind have become a familiar institution. We read daily of conferences of youth groups, of churchmen, of economists, of educators, of scientists, of industrialists, of labor leaders, of government officials. Not all of these groups employ informal discussion exclusively; but many do, and the practice of substituting discussion for debate is growing. The discussion conference sometimes aims only at the exchange of information, as when city managers meet to learn of each other's problems and methods. More often it seeks to solve a problem, to resolve a conflict, or to formulate a policy. In the case of youth and religious groups its purpose often is educational.

While the preparation and conduct of a successful discussion conference requires careful planning and a good deal of administrative work, the purely administrative problems are not formidable. Nor is there any difficulty in providing for informal discussion by dividing the conference into small groups of fifteen or twenty each for simultaneous round-table sessions. The real difficulty is in synthesizing the results of the various round-table discussions in a set of conclusions reflecting the consensus of the entire group. To do this effectively requires special procedures, but the methods are available and experience has repeatedly demonstrated their value.

The methods employed in discussion conference depend somewhat on the purpose of the meeting and the number of those attending. They depend also on whether all of the smaller groups into which the conference is organized are to discuss the entire problem or are to divide the problem among them, each discussing one portion only. Certain procedures, however, are common to all conferences at which the discussion method is employed. In the following pages we will examine the difficulties most often encountered and suggest some of the means employed to overcome them, assuming for the purpose of explanation the conference in which all of the smaller groups discuss the entire problem. This general discussion will then be illustrated by a somewhat detailed account of an actual conference held recently in Ohio.

ORGANIZATION

It is sometimes supposed that informal discussion dispenses with organization and division of labor, that it does not need a mind to direct it or eyes, ears, hands, and feet to serve it. This is a capital mistake. Without organization group thinking is especially liable to confusion and futility. A set of officials must be provided to direct and serve the conference, and the membership must be organized into small groups capable of cooperative deliberation.

Over-all direction of the conference should be entrusted to a director well qualified for his work by training or experience. In planning the conference he should have the active assistance of a conference committee representative of the persons or groups who are to attend, which can meet with him regularly before the conference and be available for special meetings while the conference is in session. In preparing the conference the director and committee will need to appoint at least the following officials: a moderator to lead each round table, a recorder for each round table to prepare brief reports of the conclusions reached in each session, resource persons to supply information to the conference, secretaries to type up reports and take care of administrative detail, and pages to carry messages from one part of the conference to another.

The conferees must be organized in advance into small groups for round-table discussion, the number in each usually not exceeding fifteen or twenty. It is important that each group represent a cross section of the interest, background, and opinion of the entire conference. In a large conference this may be accomplished by assigning members to round tables alphabetically or at random. Sometimes, however, it is possible and preferable to ascertain in advance about where each conferee stands on the question to be discussed and to make assignments ensuring a balance of viewpoint and opinion in each group. When the members come to the conference as delegations representing local groups, it is wise to distribute the members of each delegation among the various round tables. Finally, experience indicates that the original division into small groups should remain fixed for the duration of the conference. This gives the members of each round table an opportunity to become acquainted and to develop the *esprit de corps* favorable to good discussion.

PREPARATION

Much of the planning by the director and committee must be done before the conference assembles, and it is wise to estimate liberally the time required for this work.

Preliminary arrangements.—Early in the planning decisions must be made, at least tentatively, regarding the probable size of the conference and the time schedule to be followed. When shall the conference be held? How long shall it last? About how many will attend? Into how many groups will they be divided for informal discussion? How many times will each group meet? How long shall these informal sessions be? How often and for what periods of time will the entire conference assemble in one room? Having reached tentative decisions on these matters, the committee must decide where and how to house the conference. In addition to an assembly hall capable of seating the entire group, it will be necessary to provide, for informal discussion, a sufficient number of small conference rooms conveniently situated and suitably equipped with large tables, chairs, and blackboards. In some cases provision must be made also for lodging and feeding the conferees.

Briefing the conferees.—Often another early task of the planning committee is to select and define the problem for discussion. Occasionally the problem is given, as when the president of a national organization summons state officials to consider an urgent question of organizational policy. And sometimes the conference meets to explore a problem area rather than to solve a specific problem, as when industrialists and labor leaders assemble to discuss industrial relations. In the first case previous selection of the problem is unnecessary; in the second it is impossible, and the task must be undertaken by the conference itself. But setting up the problem after the conference meets consumes valuable time and should be avoided whenever possible.

Usually those who are to confer know in advance the general area within which discussion is to occur but have not agreed upon a specific problem. A national youth group, for example, may know only that it wishes to devote its annual meeting to some problem growing out of interracial relations. In selecting the specific problem the preferences of those who are to attend, or of the local groups that are to send delegates, should of course be consulted. To accomplish this the conference committee may

invite group representatives to a preconference planning session, or it may send each participating group a questionnaire suggesting six or eight problems to be listed in the order of preference. When finally selected, the problem should be stated interrogatively.

It is sometimes desirable to supplement the statement of the problem with a definition of terms. This would certainly be true of the question, Should we press now for world federal government? To avoid confusion and misunderstanding "world federal government" should be defined in terms of some specific proposal, perhaps that advocated by the United World Federalists; or the committee should draft a brief statement indicating the type of world organization to be discussed.

When the tentative preliminary arrangements for the conference have been made and the problem has been selected and defined, this information should be sent to the persons or groups who are to attend. If the personnel of the conference is to be determined by responses to an invitation, the invitations should accompany the announcement and those expecting to attend should be asked to reply promptly.

When it is known, from responses to invitations or otherwise, who is to attend the conference, certain materials should go to the prospective conferees. In addition to the statement and definition of the question to be discussed, each should receive well in advance of the conference a statement of the agenda to be followed, bibliographies or reading material to be used in preparing for discussion, and a schedule of the principal events of the conference. Little can be expected from a conference at which the conferees arrive bewildered and unprepared.

Briefing the officials.—Reference has already been made to the importance of selecting carefully the administrative staff, the moderators and recorders, and the resource persons who are to serve as consultants on the problem to be discussed. But careful selection of the officials is not enough; each must be instructed in the performance of his duties. Briefing the administrative staff and

the recorders presents no difficulty; but if the moderators are without previous experience, they should be invited to a pre-conference training session. Upon their competence depends so largely the success of the conference that no pains should be spaired in preparing them for their work.

The consultants, too, need some instruction. They should understand that they are appearing not as advocates, but as resource persons on whom the conference will rely for information. They should, therefore, be studiously impartial in making their contribution. If they are to speak only when summoned to appear before a round table to answer specific questions, this should be made clear to them. If they will be called upon to speak at greater length before the entire conference—perhaps to supply background material before the round tables take up a particular issue—this also should be made clear. In either case they should understand that their usefulness will depend very much upon their adaptability.

PROCEDURE

As members of the conference arrive and report to conference headquarters for registration, each should be handed a copy of the schedule to be followed, indicating the hours at which general assemblies and round tables will meet, and should be referred to a bulletin board for assignment to a round table. The bulletin board should indicate also where each round table will meet and who will serve as moderator and recorder.

At the opening assembly, after an address of welcome and announcements, the director of the conference formally presents the problem for discussion, reviews the definition of terms, if any has been agreed upon in advance, and outlines the agenda to be followed. If background material is necessary for discussion of the first issue, one of the consultants is called upon to present it. The assembly then adjourns, and the round tables meet for discussion of the first issue.

As each round table examines the issue under the leadership

of its moderator, the recorder takes notes on the discussion and at the end of the session writes out or dictates to one of the conference secretaries a brief statement of the conclusions reached. When discussion runs aground for lack of information, the moderator sends a page stationed in the room to summon one of the consultants.

To synthesize the conclusions reached by the various round tables in a statement acceptable to the entire conference requires special procedures. In a conference not numbering more than a hundred the synthesis may be effected in a panel discussion held at the next assembly. Each round table sends to the platform its recorder or some other spokesman armed with the recorder's report, and the round-table representatives seat themselves in a semicircle facing the audience with a moderator at the center. After each spokesman has reported the findings of his round table, the points of disagreement are ironed out in informal discussion, some time being reserved for question and comment from the floor. At the close of the discussion a recorder prepares a statement of the consensus of the conference on the issue under consideration.

At a larger conference this procedure will not be found satisfactory. Unless a public-address system is used, the audience will have difficulty in hearing the informal discussion on the platform; and in any case the process will consume too much of the time of the entire conference. It is usually more satisfactory to allow time between each round of group discussions and the next assembly period for a private meeting of the round-table spokesmen to compose their differences and prepare a report for presentation to the next assembly.

At the second assembly the consensus of the conference on the first issue is reported; the second issue is submitted for discussion; background material, if needed in discussion of the issue, is presented; and the conference again breaks up for informal discussion. This alternation of assembly periods and round-table discussion continues throughout the conference. If the conference

lasts several days or longer, mimeographed copies of the conclusions reached on each issue may be made available as promptly as they can be prepared.

The final assembly closes with a report of the conclusions reached on the problem as a whole. And when appropriate, provision is made, through the appointment of committees or otherwise, to translate conclusions into action.

If the conference is to be one of a series, provision should be made for evaluating its procedures, so that the planning committee of the second conference can profit from the mistakes of the first. The officials, the planning committee, and a selected group of the conferees may meet for this purpose at or near the close of the conference; or they may be asked to submit reports based on a questionnaire distributed at the final session. At some conferences a special committee on evaluation is appointed to visit the sessions and prepare a report for the use of the next planning committee.

A HIGH-SCHOOL DISCUSSION CONFERENCE

On November 19, 1948, a hundred students from the high schools of central and southwestern Ohio met in Columbus for a two-day discussion conference.

For several months preceding the meeting the director of the conference had been developing plans with the assistance of a committee of teachers and students representing some of the interested schools. Arrangements were made to house the conference at the University High School on the Ohio State University campus; a list was prepared of the schools to be invited; it was decided that each participating school would send five student delegates; it was agreed to propose world federal government for discussion and to phrase the question as follows: Should we press now for world federal government? With these preliminary details arranged, the committee issued invitations to the high schools of central Ohio, stating the time and place of the meeting, the nature of the conference to be held, the question

to be discussed, the size of the delegation to be sent by each school, and promising further information and assistance to those expecting to attend.

While awaiting replies to the invitation, the committee prepared for distribution to the participating schools kits of materials including the following items: a definition of "world federal government," the agenda to be followed in discussion, a bibliography on world government, and pamphlets containing informational and controversial material on the subject. The kit contained also a schedule of the principal events of the conference and a three-page mimeographed statement on how to participate in discussion. This statement stressed the importance of a cooperative, noncontentious attitude, recommended the five "good discussion habits" discussed in Chapter 6 of this book, and advised the student to prepare for the conference by reading and discussion but to avoid committing himself to unalterable conclusions. To the high-school teacher it was suggested that study and discussion of world government be included in the work of the courses in speech, English, and social studies.

Two weeks before the date of the conference the committee requested the schools to select their delegations and to have each student indicate whether at that time he was favorable to world government, opposed to it, or undecided about it. In connection with this request the committee made it clear that the expression of opinion did not commit the student to the view expressed, that on the contrary it was hoped he would avoid reaching fixed conclusions before arriving at the conference. On the basis of this tentative expression of opinion the committee divided the hundred students expecting to attend into ten round tables of ten each, taking care to break up the school delegations and to ensure in each round table a cross section of preconference opinion.

Meanwhile final plans for the conference were being drawn. Provision was made for housing and feeding the delegates; arrangements were completed for the use at the University

High School of a large assembly hall and ten small conference rooms; a conference secretary was instructed in her duties; a staff of pages was recruited from among the students of the University High School; two members of the university's department of political science were appointed to serve as consultants on world government and instructed in their duties; a head moderator was appointed, who in turn recruited from a university course in discussion a staff of moderators to lead the round-table discussions. On the day before the conference each of the moderators received a copy of the following instructions:

Consult the bulletin board at Conference Headquarters for your assignment to a round table and for information regarding the times and places at which your round table will meet.

At the beginning of each round-table session select, or have the group elect, a member to serve as recorder. As the group completes its discussion of each main point raised during consideration of an issue, have the recorder write down the result in a terse sentence. On some points the group may have reached agreement; on others it may have failed to agree. The recorder's statement, which should not exceed five or six sentences in length, may need revising at the close of the session. It should make clear about how the group stands on each issue discussed during the hour. At the end of the session this statement is to be handed to the group's spokesman for use in the assembly period immediately following.

At the close of each session select, or have the group elect, a spokesman to represent it in the panel discussion at the assembly following the round-table discussion. The spokesman, who is to take to the platform the recorder's report from his group, should himself be effective in discussion and cooperative and objective enough to do justice in the panel discussion to the various shades of opinion represented in his group.

If your group needs facts for the more intelligent consideration of a point, send the page stationed in your room to summon one

of the consultants. He will supply the information desired and then withdraw.

Dismiss each round-table session on time, so the succeeding assembly period can start promptly.

As the conferees reported for registration on the morning of the conference, each was handed a copy of the schedule of events, was referred to the bulletin board for his assignment to a round table, and was asked to record his opinion on the question to be discussed on the following ballot:

OPINION POLL

Name: School: City:

At the beginning of the conference my attitude toward pressing now for World Federal Government is

______Strongly favorable
______Slightly favorable
______Undecided
______Slightly opposed
______Strongly opposed

These ballots were filed for comparison later with a similar poll conducted at the close of the conference.

The printed schedule of events distributed at the registration desk was as follows:

HIGH-SCHOOL DISCUSSION CONFERENCE
November 19–20, 1948
at
The University High School, Columbus, Ohio
QUESTION: Should we press now for World Federal Government?

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY MORNING, November 19

8:30–9:00 Registration and preconference balloting on the question

Assembly (Room 100)

Call to Order—by the Director of the Conference

Welcome to the Conference—by the Principal of the University High School

Welcome to the University School—by the President of the Student Council of the University High School

9:15 Demonstration panel discussion on the question by four University students, led by the Head Moderator of the Conference

9:45 Explanation of procedures to be followed—by the Head Moderator

10:00 ROUND TABLE I—Would a World Federal Government including all of the present members of the UN be preferable to the UN?

A. Would it promote peace more effectively?

B. Would it promote international cooperation more effectively?

C. Would its advantages compensate for the sacrifice of national sovereignty involved?

11:00 ASSEMBLY—Panel discussion to synthesize the conclusions reached in the round-table sessions, led by the Head Moderator

11:50 LUNCH

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

1:30 ROUND TABLE II—Would a World Federal Government without the Russian bloc of states be preferable to the UN?

A. Would it preserve peace more effectively?

B. Would it promote international cooperation more effectively?

2:30 ASSEMBLY—Panel discussion to synthesize reports of the round tables

3:15 ROUND TABLE III—Could World Federal Government be instituted by amending the Charter of the UN?

- A. Could amendments, if adopted, transform the UN into a World Federal Government?
- B. Would any one of the Big Five oppose the necessary amendments?
- C. Could the opposition of one of the Big Five block the amending process?

4:15 ASSEMBLY—Panel discussion to synthesize the reports of the round tables

5:00 Adjournment until 8:30 A.M., Saturday Morning

FRIDAY EVENING

8:00 Program of one-act plays by the University School Players

SATURDAY MORNING

8:30 ROUND TABLE IV—Could World Federal Government be instituted now by developing "regional arrangements" within the framework of the UN Charter?

- A. Would regional arrangements accomplish the purposes of World Federal Government?
- B. Could such regional arrangements be achieved now?

9:30 ASSEMBLY—Panel discussion to synthesize the reports of the round tables

10:00 ROUND TABLE V—How would an attempt to institute World Federal Government now affect international relations?

- A. Would it weaken or strengthen the UN?
- B. Would it make World War III more or less probable?

11:00 ASSEMBLY—

Panel discussion to synthesize reports of the round tables

Report of Evaluation Committee
Announcements
Summary of conclusions reached by the Conference—by the Head Moderator
Distribution of post-conference ballots on World Government

12:00 Adjournment

The summary of conclusions read at the closing assembly was as follows:

A majority of the conference are of the opinion that a world federal government including all members of the United Nations would be more effective than the United Nations both in preserving peace and in promoting international cooperation, and that the advantages of such an organization would compensate for the surrender of national sovereignty involved. Some members of the conference feel, however, that without the Slavic nations a world government would aggravate the tension between East and West and increase the likelihood of war. Those who favor proceeding without Russia do so largely in the expectation, not shared by some others, that Russia and her satellites eventually would join the new organization.

The conference is almost unanimously agreed that World Government could not be instituted now by amending the Charter of the United Nations. While the United Nations could be transformed into a world government by amending the present Charter if the amendments were unopposed, Russia would almost certainly block the processes by refusing to ratify the amendments. The conference is also agreed that while it would be feasible to develop regional arrangements within the framework of the United Nations, the result would not be World Government as this conference understands it.

The conference is sharply divided over the wisdom of agitating

now for world federal government. Some feel that agitation at this time would hasten the day on which world government could be instituted; others fear it would aggravate present international tensions and perhaps postpone the day on which such an organization could be set up.

In summary, the conference is generally favorable to the idea of world federal government if and when all nations can be persuaded to join it but does not think it feasible to institute such a government at this time.

It is interesting to note that a comparison of the ballots marked before and after the conference indicated some shift of opinion on the part of a large majority of the conferees. This was especially noticeable in the case of those who previously had been "undecided"; the discussion helped most of them to get off the fence. The predominant shift of opinion was against pressing now for world federal government.

Two weeks after the close of the conference each participating school received a final communication including statistics on attendance, a statement of the result of the shift-of-opinion ballot, a copy of the summary of conclusions reached, a copy of the report of the evaluation committee, and an announcement of the appointment of the conference committee for the following year.

According to the reports both of the students who attended and of the teachers who accompanied them, the conference was a significant educational experience. Probably in no other way could the conferees have gained so much in intellectual stimulation, clarification of thought, and practical knowledge of the democratic process. For young people—as well as for their elders—the educational value of the discussion conference is beyond question.

Its practical value in the conduct of affairs in many areas of public life has also been repeatedly demonstrated. The discussion conference is rapidly becoming one of our important democratic institutions.

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APPENDIX

A. BIBLIOGRAPHIES ON PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following bibliographies on controversial public questions are restricted for the most part to items readily found in small libraries. Those with access to a university library will be able to supplement the lists with additional titles.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA?

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AGENDA

1. What is our present policy toward Russia?
2. Is this policy satisfactory? If not,
3. How should it be changed?
   a) Should we adopt a more conciliatory policy?
   b) Should we adopt a firmer policy?
4. Should we go so far as to back up our policy with force, even if this might mean war?

SHOULD WE PRESS NOW FOR WORLD GOVERNMENT?

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AGENDA

1. Would world federal government be preferable to the UN?
2. Could we get world government now by amending the Charter of the UN? If not,
3. Should we scrap the UN and set up a world government?

SHOULD WE SUPPORT UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING?

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AGENDA

1. Do we need a stronger military program
   a) To back up our foreign policy?
   b) To prepare for a possible war with Russia?
2. If so, is universal military training the best way to provide additional military strength?
3. Would adoption of universal training tend to provoke rather than prevent war?
4. Would universal training be contrary to American principles?

SHOULD WE ADOPT A SYSTEM OF PUBLIC MEDICINE?

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AGENDA

1. How satisfactory is our present system of private medicine?
   a) Are medical services adequate?
   b) Are they within the financial reach of all who need them?
2. Would public medicine improve the situation in these respects?
3. Would public medicine
   a) Destroy the physician's incentive to do good work?
   b) Lay too heavy a burden on the taxpayer?

HOW SHOULD WE MEET THE HOUSING PROBLEM?

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AGENDA

1. Can private industry solve the problem?
2. Would voluntary cooperative housing projects help?
3. Should the government assist by
   a) Extending credit to builders?
   b) Building government housing units?

SHOULD WE HAVE MORE GOVERNMENT PROJECTS LIKE THE T.V.A.?

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AGENDA

1. Is there a need for
   a) Conservation?
   b) Flood control?
   c) Rural electrification?
2. Would projects like the T.V.A. meet these needs?
3. Would projects of this type have disadvantages that outweigh their advantages?
   a) Do they involve government competition with private industry?
   b) Do they involve government intervention in local affairs?

Appendix

IS FURTHER LEGISLATION ON CIVIL RIGHTS NEEDED?

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AGENDA

1. How essential are civil rights to democratic government?
2. How seriously are we failing to secure civil rights for all of our citizens?
3. How can the situation be improved?
   a) Is federal legislation a satisfactory solution?
   b) What can we do in our own community?

DO LOBBIES THREATEN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. Does the lobbyist perform a useful function in the legislative process?
2. What harm, if any, do lobbyists do?
3. Does the Legislative Reorganization Act guard sufficiently against harmful lobbying?
4. What further legislation would be desirable?

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AGENDA

1. Should the Communist party be banned?
2. Should labor unions be penalized for Communist leadership, as is done by the Taft-Hartley Act?
3. Should Communists be eliminated from positions in the federal government?
4. What attitude should we take toward Communist activities in our own community?

SHOULD WE HAVE A ONE-HOUSE LEGISLATURE?

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AGENDA

1. Is our legislative system satisfactory?
   a) Is it too expensive?
   b) Does it fairly represent urban areas?
   c) Is it unduly influenced by lobbies?
   d) Does it give bills adequate consideration?
2. Would a one-house legislature remedy the evils?
3. Would it involve other and more serious evils?
   a) Would its lack of checks and balances be a serious fault?
   b) Would it be controlled by the large cities?

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

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AGENDA

1. To what extent are educational opportunities denied to minority groups in the United States?
   a) At the elementary and high-school levels?
   b) In colleges?
   c) In professional schools?
2. How can the situation best be remedied?
   a) By voluntary action?
   b) By legislation?

SHOULD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BE GIVEN IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. Is there a need for more religious education today?
2. Is the school the place for religious education?
3. How should religion be taught?
   a) By a nonsectarian course taught by the regular schoolteachers?
   b) By inserting religious material into other courses?
   c) By releasing children from school to individual churches for training?
   d) By classes in schools on school time conducted by pastors or other representatives of the various churches?

SHOULD THE SALE OF MARGARINE BE UNRESTRICTED?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. What are the purposes of the present laws?
   a) Are laws against coloring intended to
      1 Prevent misrepresentation? or
      2 Discourage sale?
   b) Are the tax laws intended to
      1 Aid dairy farmers?
      2 Keep prices up?
      3 Discourage importation of oils?
2. Are these purposes sound?
3. What benefits would result from removal of
   a) The national laws?
   b) The state laws?
4. Would resulting disadvantages of removing the laws outweigh the advantages?

HOW CAN OUR MENTAL HOSPITALS BE IMPROVED?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. Is anything wrong with our mental hospitals?
   a) Do they need more equipment?
   b) Do they need more
      1 Doctors?
      2 Attendants?
2. What is being done to improve the situation?
3. What more should be done
   a) Locally?
   b) By the states?
   c) By the federal government?

SHOULD WE INCREASE CONTROLS ON ADVERTISING?

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AGENDA

1. Is anything wrong with advertising today?
   a) Is it dishonest?
   b) Is it exorbitantly expensive?
   c) Does it mar the landscape?
   d) Is it dangerous to the economy?
2. What kind of controls would prevent these evils?
   a) Local?
   b) State?
   c) National?
3. Would such controls have any disadvantages?
   a) Would they interfere with free enterprise?
   b) Would they be impossible to administer?

HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY HOLD ITS YOUTH?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. To what extent are young people leaving our community for the city?
2. Why do they leave?
3. What could be done to hold them?

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. What are the needs of our community in the areas of
   a) Economic and business activity?
   b) Civic improvement?

c) Health?
d) Social opportunity?

2. What measures can we adopt to meet the need in these areas?

HOW CAN WE PREVENT ACCIDENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY?

REFERENCES

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AGENDA

1. On the street:
   a) Where do accidents occur most often?
   b) What causes them?
   c) How can they be prevented?
2. At school:
   a) Where do accidents occur most often?
   b) What causes them?
   c) How can they be prevented?
3. On the job:
   a) Where do accidents occur most often?

b) What causes them?
c) How can they be prevented?
4. At home:
a) Where do accidents occur most often?
b) What causes them?
c) How can they be prevented?

SHOULD WE TRY TO REDUCE THE SMOKE NUISANCE?

REFERENCES

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D. Ducas, "You'll Better Your Health If You Get Rid of Smoke," *House Beautiful,* July, 1946, p. 56.

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AGENDA

1. How does smoke affect
   a) Our health?
   b) Our cleaning bills?
   c) Our morale?
2. Is there a smoke problem in our community?
   a) Is smoke visible in the air?
   b) Is there an excess of soot on window sills and furniture?
   c) Are our furnaces at home and in the factory wasting fuel?
3. What can be done about it?

a) Enforce present legislation?
b) Enact new legislation?
c) Launch an antismoke campaign?

SHOULD WE PLAN OUR COMMUNITY?

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AGENDA

1. Do we need improved planning in our community?
   a) Are residential and business districts separated properly?
   b) Is traffic handled properly?
   c) Is space available for parks and recreation?
2. How can we best start a planning program?
3. Are there objections to planning?
   a) Would it delay much-needed housing?

b) Would the cost be too great?
c) Would it be unfair to some groups?

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES?

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AGENDA

1. What are the recreational needs of our community?
   a) What groups need facilities?
   b) What types of facilities do we need?
2. Are present facilities adequate?
   a) Do we have enough parks?
   b) Do we have enough playgrounds?
   c) Do we have facilities for all age groups?
   d) Do we have enough trained supervisors?
   e) Are our facilities properly maintained?
3. What program should we adopt?
4. What new problems might arise?

a) Cost?
b) Lack of land and resources?
c) Lack of proper supervision?
d) Inability to maintain facilities?

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY?

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AGENDA

1. Is there a pubilc health problem in our community?
   a) How serious is our health problem?
   b) Can the individual solve the problem alone?
2. What have other communities done about public health?
3. Should we try any of the measures adopted by other communities?

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AGENDA

1. Are unsuccessful marriages a problem today?
   a) Are there too many divorces?
   b) Are there too many unhappy homes?
2. What causes unsuccessful marriage?
3. How can the problem be solved?
   a) What methods would be most helpful?
      1 Education on
         a Sex?
         b Homemaking?
         c Family problems?

2 Counseling

a Before marriage?

b After marriage?

3 Stricter laws and law enforcement?

b) What institutions should take these steps?

1 The school?

2 The church?

HOW CAN WE BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR CHILDREN?

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AGENDA

1. How well do we understand our children?
2. Why do we fail to understand them?
3. How might we understand them better?
   a) By the study of child psychology?
   b) By spending more time with them?
   c) By making family life more democratic?

B. A CONTROVERSIAL RADIO PANEL DISCUSSION

The following discussion was broadcast over Station WOSU on November 21, 1948.

QUESTION: How shall we meet the housing problem?

MODERATOR: William E. Utterback

PANEL:

John Bonner, realtor, a member of the faculty of the College of Commerce at The Ohio State University

Walter Shapter, builder, past president of the Columbus Home Building Association and executive secretary of the Ohio Home Builders

Henry E. Worley, realtor, chairman of the Columbus Housing Administration Commission

UTTERBACK: The members of our panel this afternoon are Mr. Henry E. Worley, Columbus real-estate broker and chairman of the Columbus Housing Administration Commission; Mr. John Bonner, of the faculty of the College of Commerce and president of the Bonner Company, realtors; and Mr. Walter J. Shapter, builder, past president of the Columbus Home Building Association and executive secretary of the Ohio Home Builders. All of these men, as you see, are real-estate men or builders.

The problem we have before us, I suppose, is one of the acute ones facing the American public: What shall we do about the housing problem? I suppose, gentlemen, that you can break this apart into two problems, can't you?—the problem of the

immediate housing shortage and a longer range problem of good and adequate housing for everybody who needs it. Suppose we take it in that fashion and tackle first the immediate housing shortage. And I suppose there the natural question to raise first, since we have a builder on the panel, is whether the private builder, in a reasonable length of time, can solve that problem. Suppose, Shapter, since you are the builder here, that you lead off. What do you think? Can the private builder solve it?

SHAPTER: Utterback, the builders of Ohio *are* solving that problem. They have used all their facilities, both man power and material, that are available at this time or will be available for next year. We are putting those things into homes at a record-breaking rate. In Franklin County here, we are building more units per capita than ever before. Nineteen forty-eight was our big year. And right now we have over thirty-five hundred units to be added to the supply this year in Franklin County. Ohio in general is doing the same. We find that the financial situation–

WORLEY: I'd just like to interrupt you before you go into the state of Ohio.

SHAPTER: All right.

WORLEY: When you talk about Franklin County, Utterback, the situation is this: The builders in Franklin County, right now and ever since the war, haven't built enough homes in Franklin County to take care of the increase in the population. Now that's also a bona fide figure, and I don't think it's fair or truthful to say, without being picked up on it, that they are providing homes. They're not even providing enough homes for the people who are the additional families in the community, much less taking care of that fifteen thousand deficit we had at the end of the war.

UTTERBACK: Bonner?

BONNER: I think the actual fact lies somewhere between these two statements. I had the pleasure recently of driving around with Mr. Burns, a member of the Real Estate Research Corporation in Chicago, which is an impartial research organization.

And they determined, at least for the city of Columbus, that we have reached the saturation point in the building of new homes at certain price levels; while at other price levels, particularly those below ten thousand, we still have need of further homes.

UTTERBACK: Well now, let's go back to Shapter here. You talk about the active building going on. Is this at price levels that are going to solve the problem?

SHAPTER: The price levels that we have today are relative. Price levels are high in labor and materials; and when people wish to buy homes that they can afford and compare them to other properties, or build under rent control, and then ask that homes—new homes—be constructed at high prices for labor and materials—I say, it seems almost impossible to satisfy that demand. But with the lifting of some of the controls, such as rent control, with the doubling up of those existing units in the state of Ohio, we think that the saturation point will come very soon. That when a man wishes a rental unit, there will be a rent sign that he can—

WORLEY: How long do you think it will be before that rent sign goes up?

SHAPTER: I think that if rent control is taken off next year, within six months you will see rent signs in Ohio cities.

WORLEY: Well, you mean to say that it's your honest conviction that if there were no rent control—that's another broadcast, Utterback; we'll get on to rent control some other time. But even then, it seems silly to say that if rent control alone were taken off, there would be fifteen thousand housing units in Columbus springing up the minute that rent control went off, or within six months. You just said you're only building three thousand or so housing units in Franklin County. The county grows a couple of thousand families a year. How can you justify any statement like that?

SHAPTER: By the reconversions, Worley. In this town we have conversions that are not in the record. We think there are fifteen hundred conversions that no one knows about in the city of Columbus. And we think that along with our building program we will solve the problem.

BONNER: Don't you think that we should postpone this discussion of rent control and get back to some of the more basic issues that go with the housing problem of today?

UTTERBACK: I'm afraid we can't get very far into it or we'll get lost in the time we have. There seem to me to be two issues raised here: the question whether the private builder can build enough houses fast enough, and the question whether he can build them cheaply enough to satisfy the demand of people who want to buy the houses. Now Shapter, I see Worley thinks that while you're building at this furious rate, the population of the county and the state is increasing so rapidly that you're never going to catch up. Have you any way to assure us on that?

SHAPTER: I don't know how we can do any more than we're doing now with the supply of material and labor that we have.

UTTERBACK: But is that enough?

SHAPTER: It's enough for the material that we can get and assemble. In other words, there'll be no more material than what we are producing now for the housing field.

WORLEY: Well, we have said, Utterback, right from the beginning in 1945, when we had a shortage of houses in Columbus, Ohio, and throughout the state of Ohio for war workers and the war effort was being impeded at that time because of the shortage, that we should do several things: that we should keep on our price controls on materials for builders; that we should continue our priority system for materials so that all of the material that could be used would go into homes and homes alone except for the business construction or manufacturing construction which would permit a manufacturer to reconvert from war to peacetime activities. The builders' group and everybody else opposed that. Now they say they don't have enough materials. They would have considerably more material if we weren't building all of these nonessential buildings—garages, playplaces—or not playplaces, but saloons—and all of that sort of thing that is being built now with material which could go into housing. There's one source of material we could tap.

BONNER: I'm just interested in what are the actual figures on the number of residential units being built as against nonresidential units. Do you happen to have those figures, Worley?

WORLEY: Well, we know this, that during the first year after the war steel, electrical supplies, lines, roofing materials, and the labor itself for at least another two thousand housing units were absorbed in the city of Columbus by commercial building. And that building meant that we simply had a loss of a couple of thousand housing units in that year.

BONNER: Don't you believe that that's part of the housing problem? For example, take a great many houses recently built in the new subdivision. Unless that subdivision is equipped with, let's say, a grocery store, a pharmacy, a bakery, and some of the other essentials, don't you believe that that housing is inadequate?

WORLEY: Well, let me say to you, my good friend Bonner, that there are plenty of lots in the city of Columbus on which housing could be built right here and now that have all of those facilities —water, sewers, streets, curbs, stores, churches, and everything else that you want! And if you go into the communities and lay out a brand new subdivision, obviously you ought to have playgrounds, you ought to have stores, churches, and so on. But I'm talking about garages and nonessential business construction.

SHAPTER: Worley, do you realize that today we have maybe eighteen thousand lots in Franklin County, and that the bars have been let down for buildings to go up on those minimum lots that you're talking about? That they're processing cases now for homes to sell for six thousand and less in the city of Columbus at three hundred dollars down and thirty-two dollars a month?

WORLEY: And how much is that mortgage going to be, and how long does that mortgage run?

SHAPTER: That's a thirty-year mortgage. That's thirty years' rent receipts that most of these people would have if they were renting.

WORLEY: That means that while a fellow's paying on that thing,

he won't have an equity in it of over three hundred dollars for about six years.

WORLEY: He won't have enough cash—

BONNER: He doesn't stay at thirty; he can go down to ten. If he signs up on thirty, he can go down to ten.

UTTERBACK: Well, now then, Shapter, I'm interested in a point that we haven't gotten very far into here, and that's the price of the houses which you think the builder can supply in sufficient quantity. I wonder if it's going to be salable at a price that the average person in the low-income bracket can pay. You say you're building them at a terrific rate. At what price level are you building?

SHAPTER: The average in Ohio would be around eighty-five to eighty-seven hundred dollars, and that would be on terms of about a thousand dollars down on a twenty-year mortgage at about fifty-five dollars a month.

UTTERBACK: What is the prospect for the house that's at the five- or six-thousand-dollar level?

SHAPTER: It's entirely in the cards today.

UTTERBACK: How so?

SHAPTER: The FHA has agreed that those houses are necessary to supply housing today, and we are now processing cases through all the FHA offices in Ohio in which this might happen—a three-hundred-dollar payment down and this long-term amortization.

BONNER: I think the difficulty is not so much one of price as one of desire. For example, the old rule of thumb is that a person should pay no more than two and one half times his annual income for housing, and that his monthly payments on his mortgage, including interest, should not be more than 25 per cent of his monthly income. Now that's all well and good. The trouble with most people today in the market is they're looking for more expensive housing than their pocketbooks can afford. There's the case of—

WORLEY: I'd just like to interrupt you right there, Bonner, and tell you that the people today are not looking for more

expensive housing than they can afford; they're looking for housing. Just plain unadulterated housing! The people are living in attics and in basements with twenty families in one house in Columbus. They are looking for housing; they are not looking for housing at more than they can afford.

UTTERBACK: Worley, you're talking now about the quantity rather than the price of the house.

WORLEY: Well, he was maintaining that the people were talking about higher prices to satisfy their ego. That's not the case at all.

UTTERBACK: Wasn't your point, Bonner, that people should buy these houses that Shapter's building here and selling for six thousand, and be content with that?

BONNER: That's right. I think it would take a big slice out of the housing problem if there were more houses in the six-thousand-dollar-price class.

SHAPTER: I'd like to put in this thought. I think that our housing authority here in Columbus, the City Housing Authority, should help us on building codes and see that we are allowed to use materials that will be on a performance standard instead of a specification standard. As yet we have no help at all in that line so that we can go down and use new materials that cost less money and that are practical and have been approved over the country by laboratories and testing methods. And today we have houses that are being built here of which only one can be built, as Lustron is doing right here now.

WORLEY: I fully agree with you, Shapter, on that. There are in our housing codes in Columbus, and in housing codes throughout the country, many archaic rules that ought to be wiped out. And that's one thing that we'll get into when we talk about the national housing program. But let me put this in. When you and Bonner, Shapter, talk about the six-thousand-dollar house, I just want people to know, Utterback, that what we're talking about is a very small house. True, it has a living room; true, it has two bedrooms; true, it has a kitchen, and a bathroom, and a basement. But brother, if a guy with as long legs as yours starts

to put his legs across that living room with three kids running around, somebody's going to stumble and fall. I'm talking about the people in this town, in this state, and in this nation who deserve good-size habitable housing at a price which they can afford to pay as a result of the income they receive from their work. Not some little, tiny one-floor-plan cot.

BONNER: How do you propose to do that, Worley, if we can't do it today?

WORLEY: Well, it seems to me the answer to that problem, Bonner, is this: We've all had a lot of high-pressure talk in thinking on both sides of this question, and now comes the time when we've got to, as a nation, adopt the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, which will, number one, provide us with a national housing organization completely financed in order that that organization can carry on the research to find out how many houses we need at what levels and make recommendations to the interested parties.

UTTERBACK: Let's come back to Worley in just a minute to develop that idea; but before we do I'd like to put to Shapter here one further question on the private builder. I'm still worried, Shapter, about the man who isn't able to buy your six-thousand-dollar house, and who ought to rent, not buy. Are you building apartment houses, and at what probable rental?

SHAPTER: Apartment houses are being built in great quantities.

WORLEY: And the answer to that, simply and cold-bloodedly, is public housing subsidized by the federal government and tax exempt by the local units, or the local communities.

BONNER: Worley, I'll agree with you that there is need for something to take care of these people who cannot afford housing. I think in the very poor classes it might be direct government housing. On the other hand, I would shudder to think of a government housing program taking hold here in the United States. Let's look at the record as far as foreign countries are concerned and see what's happened when the government's taken over there. In France there were over two hundred thou-

sand homes destroyed in the war. Since V-E Day the French government, using public housing, has only constructed twenty-one hundred of those homes.

WORLEY: Well now, wait a minute! Take a look at France itself, and look at the internal turmoil there. France is not able to do anything tangible. If they got twenty-one hundred housing units in France last year or up to this part of this year, they've done a tremendous job in housing—far better than the private builders would have done.

SHAPTER: Worley, when you take the incentive out of building, and decide that the government's going to do all these things, and you're going to have tax exemptions, what are you going to do about the other 55 per cent in the country that own their own homes? What are you going to do with those people? Are you going to walk on them, and tell them that home ownership is not the thing today, that the government should finance everybody's home?

WORLEY: Well, I'll say to you this, that we're walking on those homeowners for whom your heart bleeds, Shapter, by selling them five-thousand-dollar homes at ten thousand dollars today. And I'm worrying about getting them houses they can afford to own.

UTTERBACK: I wonder—I'm not quite sure that I understand exactly what Worley has in mind when he speaks of the government coming into the picture. Do you want the government to build the homes, or what?

WORLEY: Well, my idea is, and the idea in the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill, or the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, as it was called in the last session, is simply this: That the federal government will subsidize the building of projects in which American citizens live. And since those American citizens cannot afford to pay enough money for the rental of those projects, the government subsidizes to the extent of the money needed to pay off the cost of construction—the money which the tenants don't pay in. In addition to that the city, because the government's putting in a

far greater sum, must give those projects tax exemption until such time as the government's bonds are paid up.

BONNER: Well now, that poses another problem which I think is extremely important. And that is the occupants of this type of government housing. Where are you going to draw the line? And how are you going to carry on the project if people have increase in wages? For example, a man goes in. He can only afford fifty dollars a month, but later he gets two or three wage increases. Are you going to kick him out of that housing project, or are you going to leave him in? At the present time one of the main problems they're having with this government housing is the fact that people are putting up television antennae for their television sets in government housing. Look at one of the newspapers published in one of the government housing publications. It tells about a family that was going to visit a daughter from Goucher who had just graduated. And that's in public housing!

WORLEY: I assume that you object to the fact that people who live in public housing are American citizens and good decent people who have a daughter who goes to college. I think that's entirely fallacious reasoning. We've got to provide housing for people who can only pay fifty dollars a month. Now you tell me how we can provide it without subsidizing with federal and local money.

UTTERBACK: Shapter, do you want in on this?

SHAPTER: I'd like to say something here. What about the people that are already in fourteen hundred units in Franklin County? What have we done for them? We've got them in; now they've got to go out. Those people there have lost all their chance and inherent right to own real estate by the fact that the government came in here and let them have a lease at less than anybody else can afford. Now when we fill up the coffers and have this political czar and all that, it will not be to the highest satisfaction, never has been, and never will be.

UTTERBACK: The man who can't afford to buy a house—I

shouldn't think he's going to worry much about your depriving him of his inalienable right to own real estate.

SHAPTER: Well, that's all a man can have in this country is ownership of real estate today.

UTTERBACK: But suppose he hasn't enough money to buy real estate?

SHAPTER: He always hopes that he will have a home.

WORLEY: Suppose he's living in an attic, Shapter, or in a basement, and he's got three kids living with him, and he has no money. He's got a job that will let him pay fifty dollars a month and he can't get a place in which to live other than that attic or basement. Now what do you say he has to lose by having an apartment in a public housing project?

SHAPTER: He loses all incentive the day he goes in, and when he comes out he knows he's licked. He's got to hit the thing full in the face, and it is not the American way.

WORLEY: But Bonner just said the man's wages go up. A man's wages only go up when he does a good job and he produces more. Bonner said the man's wages–

SHAPTER: Oh, wages go up whether you do the job well or not. Wages have gone up twice and three times as high as they ever were and you don't know if there's any more–

WORLEY: And he objected to the fact that his daughter went to college!

UTTERBACK: All right, let me interrupt here, because there's another facet of this problem I wish we could get onto before we quit. We've been talking entirely so far about the more immediate or short-range problem. Now there is, or some people think there is, at all times a long-range housing problem in this country. Suppose we turn our attention for a little bit to that, apart from the immediate shortage. What is the long-range problem, Worley?

WORLEY: Well, the long-range problem is very simply this to intelligent people who are willing to face the facts: We need anywhere from ten to twenty million housing units in the

United States of America in order that our people, from the fellow who can't pay anything at all up to the fellow who can pay two hundred dollars a month, may have a decent habitable home. That's the long-range program. At the present rate at which we're operating, without the prefabricated dwelling manufacturers getting into streamlined production yet, we're not building many more than a million a year. Everybody agrees on that. All of the people agree we're doing pretty well at a million a year. But our country's growing, and that doesn't take care of the entire growth of our country. That's your long-range program.

UTTERBACK: I wonder what Shapter would think. Would you agree that there is this longer range problem?

SHAPTER: There is a long-range problem of home ownership, and I say that it's time we set our sights high enough so that a man, when he embarks on a housing venture, knows there will be no interference by government at all in his right to occupy a home that he can construct. Now when the czar comes along and makes his decision that houses are too many and maybe we'll have to tear them down where he's got his house—I don't know.

UTTERBACK: Before the czar comes in, Bonner, I see that you want to put in your two cents' worth.

BONNER: I find myself in a very uncomfortable position here, between Shapter and Worley. My belief on this long-range problem is simply this: There's no doubt that I agree with Worley on the fact that something has to be done for the people who can afford to pay fifty dollars or less and are not candidates for home ownership. On the other hand, I also agree with Shapter when he says that we must keep the government out of it. I think that the thing we most have to fear is the dominance of government in our building industry. Worley pointed out how weak France was before she fell, and how weak she is now. He could also have pointed out how weak England is, and most of the other European countries. And I think the reason for that weakness is excessive government dominance. Since we're the only country left to face and take care of the Soviet Union across the

sea now, I think we should remain strong; and the only way we can remain strong is by keeping private enterprise going full blast and keeping government domination to a minimum.

UTTERBACK: I'm wondering, Shapter, whether private builders can handle such a problem as the clearance of slums, the building of cheap-rental housing projects. Is that a thing–

SHAPTER: The clearance of slums is not a builder's job. That's a health problem for every city. Every community must decide what it would like to do in congested areas in clearing slums. That's where most slums are, in the downtown areas of any large city. As for building any necessary units in this country, you will find builders ready and able to produce all the rental units and home-ownership units that are needed. We are doing that, and we will keep on doing that.

WORLEY: Well, the facts remain, Shapter, and you know them as well as I do, that the builders never have provided all the housing units that were needed or else we never would have had slums. Since the early days of this country we've had slums, and the reason we have is that you fellows have always built houses at the top level and sold them where the most profit was, and let the poor guy take the bottom house at the bottom of the heap as people moved up into the other houses.

SHAPTER: Well, we find that the reason for slums in most big cities is the fact that the health departments and those in city government have let those areas deteriorate. In other words, they let cinders grow 3 feet deep and alley refuse accumulate around these places. And the people–first thing you know they're bringing in this kind of a condition themselves. The houses do not make slums; it's people who cause slums.

WORLEY: I'd just like to say for the American people who are forced to live in slums because of their low income and the only rentals available to them at low income that the people do not make slums! And I'd like to answer Bonner by saying that if he'll study a little bit farther into government housing, public housing, my good friend Bonner, you'll find that in the Scandi-

navian countries the public housing projects are a credit to the world and a credit to their people. And that we needn't have any fear of czars and Communism when we take care of people and give them decent American housing and decent habitable housing. It's only when they don't have decent housing that we need to fear the siren song of Communism.

UTTERBACK: Bonner?

BONNER: May I come in? Yes, I do agree with you, Worley, that the Scandinavian problem has been handled better than anywhere in the world. However—

WORLEY: Is their democracy any better than ours?

BONNER: Let's look at the problem now just a minute, Worley. The way the Scandinavians handle this problem of housing is to build a house and then give it to the people—a single house unit—and say, Now you're the homeowner. You maintain this property, you keep it up; it's yours. They're not made wards of the government.

WORLEY: On the contrary, in Oslo they have housing projects just like our public housing authority. Throughout the entire Scandinavian countries they have housing projects like our public housing projects. There are some such operations as you say, but they are not given to the people. The people rent them or buy the property. They're given a responsibility, just as they are in our public housing projects, to keep the yards up, take care of their refuse, and keep the property up.

BONNER: I think the main thing that this discussion has shown so far is a lack of agreement as to what are the facts about housing, both in this country and in other countries. And I would like to side strongly with Worley when I say that the main thing we need is research. Independent research on questions like these: What are the facts? How much of a housing problem do we have? How can the need best be remedied? I'm not sure that the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill, or the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill, whichever it will be in the next Congress, is the answer. I think that the answer might be found in some of our great educational

institutions throughout the country sponsoring a housing survey to be made within their own states. We certainly need the facts. There's no doubt about that.

WORLEY: Well, Bonner, I'd like to agree with you, because you know of my very deep affection and respect for Ohio State University. But when you talk about any organization in the Ohio State University making a thorough and complete and irrefutable survey of the housing needs in the state of Ohio, you're talking about an enormous task that will require this organization at the university to go back to the local levels and use agencies which are already in the field, whose facts heretofore have always been disputed as being slanted. We need a national housing agency to do this job for us throughout the country.

UTTERBACK: I see, gentlemen, that our time is up. Now, it's my job to summarize the discussion. That's going to be a hard job (laughter). We have explored the problem as much as one can in so short a period of time, and I think it is pretty clear at what points we are disagreed. On the immediate shortage problem there is disagreement both as to whether the private builder can build enough houses fast enough and also as to whether he can build them at a low enough price, either for the purchaser or for the renter. Worley thinks the government will have to assist. Shapter thinks that the government need not and that it would be highly undesirable if it did. On the long-range problem we have much the same division. Apparently most of you, perhaps all of you, would like to see more facts on this problem and would like to see a survey made. But even here there is a possibility of disagreement, and we immediately hit that disagreement! Should this be done by existing agencies or should the federal government undertake the survey? I think that that's about as near as we have come to agreement. Thank you, gentlemen.

C. AN INFORMATIONAL RADIO PANEL DISCUSSION

The following discussion was broadcast over Station WOSU on February 6, 1949.

TOPIC: Why is mental health our number one public health problem?

MODERATOR: William E. Utterback

PANEL:

Dr. E. J. Humphreys, Acting Commissioner of Mental Hygiene for the State of Ohio

Professor A. R. Mangus, Department of Rural Economics and Rural Sociology, The Ohio State University

Mrs. Marion S. Wells, Executive Secretary of the Ohio Mental Hygiene Association

Chief Justice Carl V. Weygandt, of the Ohio Supreme Court

UTTERBACK: The members of our panel this afternoon are Mrs. Marion S. Wells, Executive Secretary of the Ohio Mental Hygiene Association; Chief Justice Carl V. Weygandt, of the Ohio State Supreme Court; Dr. E. J. Humphreys, Acting Commissioner of Mental Hygiene for the State of Ohio; and Professor A. R. Mangus, of the Department of Rural Economics and Rural Sociology here at the University.

I suppose, Mrs. Wells and gentlemen, that it's a far cry from the conception of some generations ago that our mentally ill are persons to be put out of the way where we don't have to see them—a far cry from that conception to our modern conception, which all thoughtful people hold, that they are ill persons and require treatment. But we see stories in the papers frequently that make us suspect that the implications of the more modern and humane conception have not been fully realized by a good deal. And I suppose it's out of that failure to realize those implications that our question for discussion today arises.

I suppose that what our radio audience would like to hear you talk about are things like these: What is the picture in regard

to mental health in this country? If there's a good deal of mental ill-health, what are some of the basic causes of that ill-health, and finally, what do you think we ought to do about it?

Suppose you start us out, Professor Mangus. What are some of the facts? What is the situation anyway?

MANGUS: Well, it seems to me we're certainly correct in thinking that mental health is our number-one public health problem. Some of our cleverest statisticians have attempted to figure out what the chances are that a child living today will grow up to be a healthy or an unhealthy individual. The facts they give us are rather startling. For example, they tell us that about four or five out of every hundred children in our schools today will spend some part of their lives in a mental hospital; that another four or five will develop serious mental illness but will not be cared for in a hospital; that another three or four will be so retarded that without special training they will have difficulty in becoming self-supporting. Altogether, I suspect that another thirty to fifty will be maladjusted persons. They will make unsuccessful marriages ending in divorce or separation. They'll be occupational misfits. Altogether probably less than half will become fully mentally healthy persons achieving personal happiness and social usefulness.

UTTERBACK: That's a pretty sad picture, Mrs. Wells. Do you go along with that statement?

WELLS: We certainly do. The survey in Lyman County certainly substantiates what Dr. Mangus has said. We found there that one out of five of our school children was in need of special help because of emotional maladjustments. We found that one out of every two marriages was ending in divorce.

HUMPHREYS: Yes, and is it not true that one out of every twenty babies born today will spend a part of his or her lifetime in a state institution? And besides that, is it not true that more than half the hospital beds in this country are occupied by people suffering from mental disorders—roughly six hundred thousand?

MANGUS: Yes, it is. And I didn't mention the fact that one or

two out of every hundred children will spend some time in a jail or prison or the penitentiary.

UTTERBACK: Do I understand you to say, Dr. Humphreys, that half of the beds in hospitals—

HUMPHREYS: Half of the total number of hospital beds in this country are occupied by people suffering from mental disorders of one kind or another.

WELLS: That isn't all of them. There are millions more that can't get into the institutions.

WEYGANDT: One thing I should like to add to Dr. Mangus's statement about the importance of the problem of health hygiene is that in years gone by we have emphasized physical health and have said relatively little about mental health or hygiene, so that physical education and physical health are very much ahead of mental health or hygiene today.

UTTERBACK: Justice Weygandt, I suppose that in the court you see this question constantly from one point of view. Do you agree with the facts that have been presented here by other members of the panel as to the extent of mental ill-health?

WEYGANDT: Yes, I do. I think the truth is that the real extent of the problem is not known. I think that this is one of the things we're glad to forget, as we're glad to forget the war. But the problem is with us and certainly requires more public attention than it's receiving.

MANGUS: Yes, and I think I would like to come back again to the point that Mrs. Wells made about children. It seems that about five or six out of every hundred of our children certainly are vulnerable to serious mental breakdowns. It also occurs to me, in seeing the movie "Snake Pit," which some of our listeners probably have already seen, that many of the people who have suffered these severe mental breakdowns and are now in our hospitals, not so many years ago were children in our classrooms who already had symptoms of mental ill-health. But nobody detected them, nobody did anything about them—and that's the result, the mental hospital.

WELLS: You're certainly right, Professor Mangus. If we could only have every citizen in Ohio see this picture "The Snake Pit," it would make us realize the great need for early diagnosis and treatment of these cases. And just as the Chief Justice has said here, we have not thought of mental illness as we have thought of physical illness. We thought of it as something to be ashamed of, a stigma, and we've not thought of it as something that could be treated and cured. And that is where the emphasis should be in this whole program.

HUMPHREYS: I should like to emphasize what the Chief Justice has already mentioned, and that is that really we have to consider the physical and mental together. We cannot separate mind and body, and it is the *whole* person that we must consider in whatever we try to do about it. And it is our *whole* society that we must include in our planning.

MANGUS: Well, is it not true, Doctor Humphreys, that a great many of the physical ills really grow out of emotional difficulties?

HUMPHREYS: There is no question about that. As a matter of fact, we have a long name for it.

UTTERBACK: This is certainly a striking picture that you seem entirely agreed upon as to the extent of mental ill-health. I wonder if anything can be said about the causes of mental ill-health? How does it come that so many people have this kind of difficulty?

WELLS: Looking at it very simply, we could probably say that when the baby is just a few hours old, there is possibility of the beginning of emotional maladjustments. You see, there are three basic needs for mental health, as I've heard Dr. Mangus point out many times: the need for a feeling of security, the need for belonging, and the need for a feeling of adequacy. So those three basic requirements are what we must think of in discussing the problem.

UTTERBACK: She is not saying that people inherit a tendency to mental ill-health. Do you think they do as a matter of fact, Dr. Humphreys?

HUMPHREYS: Well, in certain instances there's no question about it that heredity does play a part, but I don't think we should worry too much about this matter because the big point is, What can we do about what we are? We are what we are in terms of our own basic body chemistry; we are what we are in terms of our early childhood experiences.

WEYGANDT: And isn't it true that most of this is not congenital?

HUMPHREYS: Yes, I would say that in a general way.

UTTERBACK: Well now, Mrs. Wells has pointed her finger first at the home environment; and I take it, Mrs. Wells, you consider that a pretty important part of the picture, do you?

WELLS: We feel that it's a very important part. Much can be taken care of in that home environment.

MANGUS: Yes, and I think we ought to know what we are talking about when we use the term "environment." We're not talking about the physical environment. The kind of house that the person lives in may be of no importance, or the kind of furniture, or the kind of physical surroundings. More important, as Mrs. Wells has indictaed, are these personal relationships between parents and children, between husbands and wives, among the children themselves. The disturbance in these relationships creates tensions and bitter feelings that may end in very serious emotional difficulties.

UTTERBACK: Are you suggesting, Mrs. Wells, that the parents are not wise enough to bring up their children properly, or are you saying the same thing Professor Mangus says, that disturbed relationships in the home are the cause?

WELLS: Well, I think it all goes back to knowing how to be a parent. And there again is a big job for us to do—educating our parents to be better parents, to be able to accept these children into the home and make them part of the family life.

WEYGANDT: And another contributing factor that I should like to mention is the war. I realize that we have a tendency to blame about everything on the war, but here certainly is one thing that can be attributed in large part to the war. And not alone are the people troubled who were actually in the Military. I some-

times wonder whether the mental strain on those who were not participants was not in some instances as great as on those who were actually in combat. For example, just about two weeks ago we all read in the prints about a student twenty-seven years of age who met his twenty-two-year-old wife on the streets of the city of Akron and attempted a reconciliation with her and was unsuccessful. The result was that he shot and killed her and then committed suicide himself. And the comment of the girl's father was, "What a tragedy that two young people as fine as they were, were unable to adjust themselves to conditions after the war period."

MANGUS: Many of the difficulties that we experience today are rather direct results of the war. Many others are indirect. The war's effect on the family, for example, has been to break up the family and cause greater family instability. The fact is that many of the marriages that occurred during the war were hasty, ill-advised marriages between people who weren't fitted for each other at all—not suited to each other. And the fact is that in many instances the children are now subjected to influences that will stick with them for the rest of their lives, because many adult ills trace their origin right back to disturbed relationships during childhood.

WEYGANDT: Dr. Mangus, you referred to ill-advised marriages. Not long ago a young student came in to talk to me about his divorce case. I inquired some as to the details. He said that he was in the Military, got over into Australia, was lonesome, disturbed. He met a girl one evening. They were married a few days later, lived together one day, and found that in no way were they suited for marriage with each other.

UTTERBACK: Dr. Humphreys, I notice that in seeking the causes for mental ill-health we tend to look at the home primarily and to disturbances in the home relationship, and to lack of wisdom on the part of parents in handling the children. If you look at other institutions and the community as a whole, do you find any cause there for mental ill-health?

HUMPHREYS: Oh yes, there's no question about it.

UTTERBACK: What do you see there?

HUMPHREYS: You see these disturbances arising out of, as I have said before, the body chemistry, as it were, in terms of our glandular activities. And we see them rising out of the disturbances of the home as a whole. And incidentally, I think we all still agree that the home is the unit of our civilization. And I also see disturbances arising out of specific communities, such as, say, state institutions. We bring folks into these institutions to be treated, and yet I have reason to believe that certain disturbances in this community as a whole might very profoundly affect the treatment experience of that person.

MANGUS: In talking about the community, I think we should not overlook the school as one of the community influences that are profoundly important in the life of the child. For example, we find that many of the children who become delinquent are children who failed in school. And many of the children who have nervous breakdowns and who have emotional difficulties are children who haven't been able to get along very well in school.

WEYGANDT: Dr. Mangus, I should like to add to your comment about the importance of the school and the home. We in the courts find that the public has the idea that the courts are the most powerful influence for the enforcement of law and for securing proper behavior in people in the given community. Of course, as you point out, the schools are important, tremendously important. So are the churches in the community. But the thing I want to emphasize is that no matter how well the public schools and the churches and the courts perform their duties, they cannot serve as a substitute for the vital influence of the home.

WELLS: I should like to ask Dr. Humphreys about this community problem. I'd like to get his viewpoint on just what communities can do to have mentally healthy people.

HUMPHREYS: Well, of course communities can establish certain services. Some of these services may be in the form of receiving

hospitals which are halfway stations between a mental hygiene clinic and, say, the state hospital—a place where you can go for relatively rapid treatment on a voluntary basis. The mental hygiene clinics or guidance centers can serve you directly. You can go there from your own home and return to your home within the same morning. And there is a possibility of establishing other units—special accompanying services for alcoholism and for problems in industry; or in the farm districts it's possible to establish special services. There are still other services that can be established.

UTTERBACK: Now that gets us, doesn't it, on to our third question, which we ought to have raised in any case: What can you do about this? How did you react to Dr. Humphreys' suggestions, Mr. Mangus?

MANGUS: Well, I seemed to react very favorably toward them. I would like to point out the particular need now for emphasis on prevention and the positive promotion of mental health. In the program of prevention particularly we need a major campaign of public education to remove the stigma from mental ill-health for one thing. We need an educational campaign to develop sound public understanding of the nature and the treatment of personality disorders. And of course we need better facilities and services for treatment, and we need research into the background—into the causes—to find out what the difficulties are.

UTTERBACK: Let's take those suggestions one at a time for a moment. We need better and more personnel, I suppose, and more and better facilities. But back of that you suggest, I think, that we need a greater consciousness on the part of the public of this problem and better public support for what needs to be done.

HUMPHREYS: We don't expect to be able to develop these special services unless the public is better informed and is more conscious of them.

WELLS: Well, I'm afraid the public doesn't know how to use

them. I mean that for the most part they need to be educated as to *how* to use them.

MANGUS: As I understand it, that's one purpose of your organization, is it not, Mrs. Wells? The Ohio Mental Hygiene Association has as one of its purposes, at least, that of stimulating active public support in the use of sound mental health programs.

WELLS: You're certainly right, Professor Mangus. We feel that our major task is to do a real educational job with the public—to teach them that mental illness can be cured, that it can even be prevented, and that something really can be done about it.

WEYGANDT: I should like to add this with reference to the relative importance of institutions and other means of prevention. Now of course public institutions are extremely important, and Ohio ought to be thoroughly ashamed of her limitations in these facilities. But the thing that I like to believe is that in this organization lies the possibility of educating the public, particularly the parents, so that parents themselves may understand something of the fundamental nature of the problems that beset their children. Somehow we have the idea that all a boy or girl needs to do is to grow up to be an adult, and that that individual automatically becomes possessed of the qualifications of a good father or a good mother. And that is not true! Not long ago we had a teen-age boy whose case went through our court. He had participated in the cruelest kind of killing of a harmless individual, and one of his basic complaints was that neither his father nor his mother had ever understood him.

WELLS: I'd like to just mention here, too, a case that came to my attention several days ago from a nearby county—a boy ten years old, from a broken home, who developed such feelings of insecurity that the school felt that they could no longer handle him. He was a desperate character. And what were they going to do about this boy? We sent him to the Bureau of Juvenile Research; we got a definite recommendation for psychiatric treatment which would help him with his emotional maladjustment.

But where is this county going to give that child such treatment? We need community services which will offer these treatment services to our school people and our court people so that they can follow through.

UTTERBACK: Do communities in this state generally lack services of this kind?

WELLS: We certainly do. We have four part-time guidance centers set up under federal funds through the state department of welfare and the division of mental hygiene, but these are just demonstration projects. And they're showing us what we need throughout the state. We certainly need to have state-subsidized guidance centers located strategically throughout the state to give services to all our communities.

MANGUS: I suppose in order to meet even minimum standards for a state like Ohio we ought to have fifty, sixty, or seventy, or maybe a hundred guidance centers. Now we have only a little handful.

HUMPHREYS: That's right. Theoretically speaking, we need one for every one hundred thousand people.

WEYGANDT: One thing I should like to mention in connection with this matter of furnishing proper guidance or supervision. There's a provision of a law that enables a trial judge, instead of sentencing a defendant to an institution, to suspend the sentence and place him on probation with the probation officers of that court. Now one of the most shameful facts about the whole state of Ohio is the utter inadequacy of that supervision. For example, in my home county of Cuyahoga each one of those probation officers has from three to five hundred people to supervise. And anyone who gives any thought to the matter knows that it's impossible for any one individual, no matter how competent and capable he may be, to properly supervise from three to five hundred people who are having a problem with their behavior.

HUMPHREYS: The same situation is seen in reference to a lot of the folks that we return to the community. There is not suf-

ficient supervision. Many could be sent out to the community if we had more facilities for supervision.

WELLS: You mean we need more psychiatric social workers? We need more psychiatric nurses?

HUMPHREYS: That's right.

UTTERBACK: Is the difficulty here that these trained persons are not available, or that the state just isn't paying enough money to employ them and provide the facilities?

WELLS: Both problems exist. We don't pay enough to attract people into state service, and then, too, we don't have adequate training facilities.

UTTERBACK: When you suggest what we can do about it, three things mainly have been suggested. One is the expansion and further development of community services of various kinds; another is a public education campaign that would induce people to avail themselves of whatever services are available; and the third, as I understand you, is training for parents who bungle the job at home in handling their children. I was a little intrigued by that point and hoped you'd develop it a little further. In what way are you going to train these parents to provide the right kind of home?

MANGUS: Well, I feel that most parents are doing the best job they know how with their children, but even those that are trying to do a good job in many instances unwittingly and unintentionally manage their children in such a way that they contribute to their emotional maladjustment. We feel that we need a very vigorous program of parent education. And that program should be carried out for parents who are now in service—in the service of rearing children—through a series of lectures, through study and discussion groups, in short courses, perhaps even in full courses in parent education.

UTTERBACK: What institution would be the proper one to undertake such a program of parent education?

MANGUS: Well, we feel that we have to mobilize the resources that we *have* for providing this kind of education in the state of

Ohio, and I'm quite sure that there is a tremendous amount of resource if we can simply mobilize it.

WELLS: Well, our state organization recognized the talents here, and we hope that we will be able to work with local groups already set up, such as your PTA groups, your mothers' clubs, the various local organizations already interested in parent education. It's just a matter of getting the material to them and working with them.

WEYGANDT: I'm glad to hear you make that observation, Mrs. Wells, because this organization isn't interested in setting up additional organizations; it is interested primarily in making thorough use of the organizations that are already at hand.

WELLS: That's right. Of course we are also interested in organizing community committees on mental hygiene to unify the effort.

WEYGANDT: I understand that. But the thing I liked about your statement a moment ago was your mention of the Parent-Teacher Associations. I personally don't know of any organization in the community where I live that has a greater potential for influence among the youngsters than just those parent-teacher associations.

WELLS: That's right, and you know it's quite thrilling to find so many national and state and local groups interested in mental hygiene. All we need to do is use what's already set up.

HUMPHREYS: We turn to these groups for help in terms of interpreting our program and what we're after. When you think of the forty-one thousand patients we have in our division of mental hygiene and division of correction and realize what they mean in terms of broken homes, then you feel more eager than ever to turn to these local organizations for help in preventing these things from happening.

MANGUS: Well, I feel that the moving force back of these developments, if they are to be undertaken, must be a citizens' committee, such as the one that Mrs. Wells is representing here. These organizations are ready to work, but they need service; and

we need some strong state and local mental hygiene associations to provide them with the services they need in this field.

UTTERBACK: Well now, let me take this question you're discussing here—What can we do about it?—and for just a moment put it in this form: What can *I* in my own community as an individual do about it? We'll say that I'm very much impressed by what you've said here and I would like to do something. What should I do, Mrs. Wells?

WELLS: Well, first you can assist in organizing county groups interested primarily in mental hygiene that will work with all your various organizations in the community in developing better mental hygiene services. You can contribute, too, to the Ohio Mental Hygiene Association. At the present time we're conducting a campaign known as The Mental Health Crusade for Happiness, and we're mailing out Valentine seals throughout the state. Contributions coming in to the state organization will be used to expand our services throughout the state. The Governor has proclaimed Ohio Mental Health Week this next week, February 7 to 14, and certainly during that time it would be helpful to have programs before all the organizations on mental health.

UTTERBACK: I see, Mrs. Wells and gentlemen, that our time is up. Let me try to sum up the discussion. You put before us at the beginning some very interesting and striking facts in regard to the extent of mental health. When you came to consider some of the causes, you didn't feel that inherited mental ill-health was a very important part of the picture actually; that one of the chief causes of mental ill-health is an unsatisfactory situation in the home; and that this sort of thing is aggravated now by the war and the results of the war. You mentioned disturbed relationships of nearly all kinds, marital and otherwise, as having a tendency to produce mental ill-health. And Dr. Humphreys thought that the community itself in some cases was a contributing factor. Now what can we do about it? There are three things essentially, as I understand you. One is greatly to expand com-

munity services of various sorts that address themselves to this problem. Another is to train parents to handle their children more wisely than many parents now do. And finally a public health campaign might induce people to make fuller use than they now do of such services as are available. Thank you very much.

D. ORGANIZING A DISCUSSION COURSE

The following pages are intended for the teacher who is using this book for the first time and for those who wish to use it for their own instruction without the help of a teacher.

The writer has found the material in the book adequate for two separate courses at the college level: an elementary course designed to develop skill as a participant in discussion and a more advanced course in discussion leadership. While the suggestions which follow assume such a division of the material, the teacher who prefers a single course will have no difficulty in adapting the suggestions to his use.

A discussion course, at either the elementary or the advanced level, is intended to develop skill. It must, therefore, provide ample opportunity for practice. This means that the class should be small, preferably not over twenty, and that the instructor should not attempt to present more theory than can really be mastered in the time available. It is usually wiser to omit consideration of some topics altogether than to leave inadequate time for experience in actual discussion.

AN ELEMENTARY COURSE

Schedule of the course.—The work of the course may conveniently be divided into five sections, though this does not imply that an equal amount of time is devoted to each. For the first section, which may occupy the class for a week, Chapter 1 (Decision through Discussion) and Chapter 2 (When Is Discussion Profitable?) are assigned. The class may profitably spend some time in discussing the contents of the chapters and in pooling

such experience as its members have already had with group discussion. Several hours may then be devoted to informal discussion by the entire class of a few simple campus problems, the instructor serving as moderator. These early discussions, conducted without specific attention to method, provide a common background of experience that will be useful for illustrative purposes when the class turns its attention to a consideration of method.

For the second section the following chapters may be assigned: Chapter 3 (Preparing for Discussion), Chapter 4 (Mapping the Problem), Chapter 5 (Thinking Together), and Chapter 6 (Participating in Discussion). After discussing the contents of the chapters the class should devote a day or two to exercises illustrating the methods suggested in Chapter 4. Working out a satisfactory agenda for use in discussion is more difficult than at first appears, and many students have difficulty with it. Perhaps the most useful exercise is for the class to work out together an agenda for each of several such questions as the following: Should X College adopt the honor system? Should final examinations be abolished? Should our system of student government be revised? Questions of this type afford useful practice in analysis and are sufficiently within the student's range of information and experience to make analysis possible without previous research. As an exercise based on Chapter 5 and 6 the instructor may lead the class in discussion of such questions as these: What is democracy? What is Public Opinion? Should the American Communist party be banned? To discuss these questions thoroughly the class would need to do some reading and to work out an agenda, but regarded simply as an exercise based on Chapter 5 and 6 the discussion may be profitable without this preliminary work.

The class now has sufficient knowledge of method to attempt the methodical discussion of controversial public questions based on serious reading, and it is suggested that the third section of the course be devoted to a series of panel discussions lasting

several weeks. During the period devoted to these discussions it is recommended that no further theory be studied; until the student has tested in practice the suggestions in the first six chapters, further attention to method is likely to confuse him. The series of panel discussions may be arranged as follows:

The class is divided into panels of about six each, and each panel selects a controversial public question for study and discussion. In selecting each question care should be taken to ensure that it interests the group, that information on it is available, and that there is at least some initial difference of opinion on it among the panel members. In making the selection the class may wish to consider some of the topics proposed in the first section of this Appendix. While the bibliographies listed there may be useful, each panel should work out its agenda independently.

It is expected that the members of each panel will devote several days to serious study of the question before attempting to discuss it and that they will continue study of the question during the entire period devoted to its discussion. To give them an opportunity to do the preliminary reading, it may be well to interrupt the work of the preceding section long enough to select the questions to be discussed.

To ensure thorough preparation for the panel discussions some teachers ask their students to submit at some time during the period devoted to discussion, or at the end of it, a document embodying the results of their study. Chapter 3 contains an illustration of such an outline with suggestions regarding its use in discussion. Some teachers also require members of the class to read a good newspaper regularly to obtain the general background of information needed in the discussion of public questions.

During this section of the course the instructor serves as moderator and conducts the panel discussions on the assumption that while only the members of the panel are studying the problem, the entire class hopes to profit from the discussion.

On the first day one of the panels, seated in a semicircle facing the class, analyzes its problem and works out an agenda. On the next day the second panel performs the same task. When each panel has agreed upon an agenda, the panels appear before the class in rotation. On Monday, for example, the first panel begins methodical discussion of the issues listed on its agenda. As the panel completes its discussion of each issue, the class is invited to participate for a few minutes before the panel proceeds to the next issue. On Tuesday and Wednesday the second and third panels are similarly employed. Assuming that the class has been divided into three panels, the first panel returns on Thursday to resume discussion at the point reached in its agenda at the end of the hour on Monday. Each panel will probably need a total of from three to six sessions to complete discussion of its problem.

During this series of discussions the instructor may wish to reserve the last five or ten minutes of each hour for critical comment on the work of the individual members of the panel.

For the fourth section of the course, occupying perhaps a week of time, Chapter 8 (Beneath the Surface of Argument) and Chapter 9 (Pitfalls in Thinking) are studied, and several days are devoted to a discussion of their contents and to such classroom exercises based on the chapters as the instructor may care to assign. Two exercises in particular the writer has found useful in illustrating the material in the first section of Chapter 8. The first is to ask a member of the class to make an assertion and give one reason in its support, then to ask another member to supply the missing premise of the argument.

The second exercise is somewhat more difficult. Two students who hold conflicting views on some topic are seated on either side of the instructor facing the class. One student makes an assertion and gives one reason supporting it. The other supplies the missing premise of the argument and indicates whether he accepts each of the two premises. If he accepts one, let us say, and rejects the other, the first student gives one reason in support of the

rejected premise. The second student again supplies the missing premise of the argument and indicates his reaction to each premise. This process may be continued until the second student accepts both premises of an argument or until the first confesses his inability to carry the argument further. The conversation runs somewhat as follows:

FIRST STUDENT: No, I certainly would not call Russia a democracy.

SECOND STUDENT: Why not?

FIRST STUDENT: For one thing, because there is no opposition party.

SECOND STUDENT: The missing premise of the argument is that an opposition party is essential to democracy. I agree with the stated premise, that no opposition party exists in Russia; but I question whether an opposition party is essential to democracy. Why is it?

FIRST STUDENT: Because in a democracy you must be able to change the government without having a revolution.

SECOND STUDENT: The missing premise here is that an opposition party is necessary for a peaceful change in the government.

INSTRUCTOR: (to Second Student): Suppose you restate the entire argument.

SECOND STUDENT: The complete argument is this: An opposition party is essential to democracy, because a peaceful method of changing the government is essential to democracy, and an opposition party is necessary to change the government peacefully. I accept the first premise, but I don't see why you must have an opposition party to change the government peacefully.

In practice the conversation seldom runs quite so smoothly as this. Many students have difficulty at first in supplying the missing premise of an argument, and occasionally verbose or clumsy

statement so confuses the situation that the instructor must step in to restate the argument himself. The exercise is a difficult one, but there is no better way to sharpen a student's awareness of the structure of deductive argument.

The fifth, and final, section of the course is devoted to a second series of panel discussions on controversial public questions. By this time the instructor may feel that his students are becoming too preoccupied with the content of their discussions to give adequate attention to method. He can direct attention to method more sharply by asking a student to moderate the discussion and by dividing that portion of the class not involved in the panel discussion into two groups of observers, one group to observe and comment on the work of the moderator, the other on the work of the panel. The student moderator is instructed to take care that the panel follows its agenda and that in moderating the discussion of each issue he follows the four steps suggested in Chapter 5: exploration of the issue, taking stock of the situation, resolution of conflicts, and summary of the discussion. From time to time the instructor interrupts the discussion to call on the observers for critical comment on method.

Evaluation of the student's work.—A student's grade in the course should depend in large measure upon the quality of his contribution to the panel discussions. Using the material in Chapter 6 as a basis, the instructor can easily draw up a check list of from six to a dozen points on which participation may be evaluated. But it is clearly impossible for him to check each of these items for each of six or eight panel members while moderating the discussion. After experimenting with several such check lists, each simpler than the last, the writer has abandoned the check list as an aid in evaluation. He finds it more useful to have before him a single sheet of paper with the names of the participants written at the top in the order in which they are seated around the table, the remainder of the page being reserved for his notes as moderator of the discussion. During the hour it is possible to set down a grade opposite each name at the top of

the sheet; it is hardly possible to do more without neglecting the duties of the moderator.

Most teachers will wish their students to write one or more examination papers on the theory covered in the course. For testing the student's grasp of method the teacher may find the following assignment of a term paper more effective than a conventional examination.

> On the last day of the term you are to submit a paper testing your command of the discussion methods studied in the course. The paper will purport to be the stenographic report of a discussion held by a group of four participants and a moderator, the contributions of each being set down as in the illustrative passage at the close of Chapter 7. You may have this imaginary group discuss any controversial question you please, but you are to assume that at a previous meeting the group has worked out an agenda and that at the meeting reported only one issue of this agenda is under discussion. At the beginning of the discussion there should be on this issue at least some difference of opinion in the panel.
>
> In evaluating your paper, the instructor will be especially interested in the following questions: (1) Do the individual participants display attitudes favorable to effective participation? (2) Do they demonstrate good discussion habits? (3) Is the discussion clearly divisible into four sections—exploration of the issue, stocktaking, resolution of conflicts, and summary?

AN ADVANCED COURSE IN DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP

In an advanced course open only to students who have taken the elementary course, attention can be centered upon the problems of discussion leadership and upon the adaptation of method to special situations. The course may be divided into four sections.

For the first section Chapter 7 (Moderating Discussion) is assigned and discussed in class. Before asking the student to assume full responsibility for moderating discussion, the instructor will find it useful to devote several days to demonstration and practice in moderating discussion in very simple situations. The simplest situation in which the moderator's method may be employed is the discussion of a simple issue by two students only. Seating one student on his left and the other on his right, facing the class, the instructor moderates their discussion of the issue. During 20 minutes of such discussion he should be able to demonstrate clearly the division of the discussion into four steps (exploration of the issue, stocktaking, resolution of conflicts, and summary) and will have no difficulty in illustrating most of the functions of the moderator as presented in Chapter 7. He may interrupt the discussion occasionally to call attention to method. The exercise is then repeated with four students in the panel.

After such a demonstration the instructor invites one member of the class after another to moderate a similar discussion carried on at first by two students and later by four. In this artificially simplified situation the student can be conscious of method; in a more normal situation he is likely at first to lose his bearings so completely that he cannot see what is happening. After these introductory exercises, the student may be invited to lead a larger group in discussion of a rather simple question not involving research and not too elaborate to be discussed in an hour.

For the second section of the course the class should be divided into panels, each panel choosing a controversial public question for study and discussion; and the panels, appearing before the class in rotation, should be given four or five class periods for discussion of each question. This series of discussions is handled as in the elementary course except that one member of the panel serves as moderator for the hour, while the instructor and the other members of the class act as observers and critics.

For the third section the chapters in Part III of the textbook are assigned and discussed. Most students will find the material

in one or another of these chapters at least somewhat related to their vocational plans: one, for example, plans to lead round-table discussions in his community; another expects to become a teacher; a third will go into personnel or administrative work. Each should be encouraged to use the bibliography at the end of the chapter as a guide to further reading in the discussion area of his special interest, and the instructor may ask him to prepare a paper on the special problems encountered in that area.

The fourth section may consist of a series of special projects worked out by each student individually and based on the chapter in Part III in which he is most interested. The prospective leader of community round tables may prepare to lead the entire class in a discussion of a public question; the student interested in radio may select a panel from the class and prepare a radio discussion program moderated by himself; the prospective teacher may prepare to lead the class for an hour in a simulated high-school classroom situation. Mature students, especially those with previous vocational experience, often succeed in making this a very realistic and profitable exercise.

In the advanced course no new problem in evaluation is presented. The writer wishes, however, to recommend a modification of the term paper suggested for the elementary course. The assignment differs from that previously suggested only in the following respects: The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate the student's command of method in moderating discussion. He will, therefore, have his imaginary panel members misbehave in various ways, so that the moderator can be shown dealing effectively with typical problems encountered in leading discussion. In the margin of the paper the student should set down a running commentary on the leader's method, as is done in the illustrative passage at the close of Chapter 7.

INSTRUCTION WITHOUT A TEACHER

Many organizations interested in the study of public questions would like to employ the discussion method in their programs.

They realize the importance of providing training for those who are to lead discussion but can find no one in the community qualified to direct the training. And the heads of some business firms who would like to make more use of conference in administration can find no one qualified to train conference leaders. Is it possible for a group of prospective leaders, meeting regularly for a few weeks or months, to train themselves?

Some organizations have found that it is entirely possible. Such training is likely to be less effective than when directed by an experienced teacher, but with careful planning it can be made a very good second-best method of developing leaders. The group undertaking such a course of self-instruction should be small, preferably not more than fifteen or twenty, and some one person should assume responsibility for planning the course.

The person in charge of the course should select from the textbook the chapters most likely to be useful to the particular group and work out a schedule for the series of meetings. He should plan also one or more exercises based on each chapter to provide practice after the contents of the chapter have been discussed. He may find some of the exercises suggested earlier in this section of the Appendix useful. Members of the group will find especially profitable practice in leading short discussions carried on at first by two, then by four persons. These sessions, which at first should not last longer than 15 minutes each, should be followed by critical comment from other members of the group.

Later, when those who have taken the course begin to lead full-length discussion, it will be useful to have two or three former members of the course sit in on each session as critics and report their observations and suggestions to the leader. After some preliminary instruction the inexperienced leader will find that he acquires command of the method rapidly. His first experience may be disappointing; so many things happen so rapidly and unpredictably that he feels lost. But with a little practice he begins to feel in command of the situation and soon is making a valuable contribution to the thinking of the group.

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